

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 19 OCTOBER 2010

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(200) Program 1.1: Visa and Migration

Senator Cash asked:

What is the average time taken to process a family reunion visa? How does this compare with 12 months ago? Is the blow-out in processing times a result of the stresses put on the department by the blow-out in asylum seeker numbers and the resources diverted to manage that (If there is a blow-out).

Answer:

The average processing time for all family stream visa applications, which *prima facie* would be countable in the Migration Program, in the 2010-11 program year to 31 October 2010 is 353 days.

This figure compares to 326 days for the 2009-10 program year to 31 October 2009 and 378 days for the full 2009-10 program year.

The current average processing time which is less than for the previous full program year does not clearly indicate a 'blow out' in processing times. Nevertheless, some family stream visa applicants are experiencing delays in the processing of their applications. The main reason for these delays is that demand for family reunion visas currently exceeds the number of places available in the Migration Program.