

## QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

### SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 19 OCTOBER 2010

#### IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

#### **(237) Program 2.1: Refugee and Humanitarian Assistance**

Senator Cash asked:

Can the Department confirm that a formal return agreement is not required to return failed asylum seekers to their country of origin?

*Answer:*

Whether or not a formal return agreement is required to return failed asylum seekers to their country of origin is ultimately a matter for the government of the country of origin.

In some cases a formal return agreement is required; in other cases informal arrangements brought about through bilateral relationship building are sufficient. For example:

- We have established a cooperative framework with Sri Lanka under which 72 Sri Lankan Irregular Maritime Arrivals were returned to Sri Lanka in the 2009-10 financial year.
- In contrast, there is little scope to conduct involuntary returns of failed asylum seekers to Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq, prior to, or in the absence of a framework for cooperation with these countries.
- Voluntary returns can generally be effected to all four countries reasonably quickly.