

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 19 OCTOBER 2010

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(246) Program 4.1: Visa Compliance and Status Resolution

Senator Cash asked:

(1) During the period 2008, 2009, 2010, how many failed asylum seekers, who have arrived in Australia as irregular maritime arrivals, have been returned to their country of origin?

(2) Which countries and at what cost?

(3) How many failed asylum seekers waiting to be removed are unable to be removed because of issues around their citizenship?

Answer.

(1) Since October 2008 when Irregular Maritime Arrivals (IMAs) began arriving in substantial numbers, there has been 82 failed asylum seekers removed from Australia. There have been others removed during the period who either withdrew their claims or did not present claims warranting further consideration in the protection process.

(2) Nationalities included Iraq, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, India, Afghanistan, Iran and United Kingdom.

Removals from Australia are generally conducted on commercial flights and there are a range of variables that affect their cost. These variables include airfares, travel documents and return assistance packages for each client in their country of return as well as escort costs (airfares, accommodation and allowances). The cost of a removal generally ranges from \$5000 to \$15 000.

(3) Prior to the High Court decision of 11 November 2010, there were 85 IMAs who had received negative protection decisions whose identity/citizenship the Department was seeking to establish in order to enable their removal. Due to the High Court decision, these individuals are now going through a new review process and are no longer available for removal.