

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 19 OCTOBER 2010

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(247) Program 4.1: Visa Compliance and Status Resolution

Senator Cash asked:

(1) During the period 2008, 2009 and 2010 how many failed asylum seekers who have arrived documented at Australian air and sea ports have been returned to their country of origin?

(2) Which countries and at what cost?

Answer:

(1) The number of people who left Australia (subject to a compliance related departure) who had previously arrived in Australia lawfully and been found not to be owed protection by Australia was:

- 855 in 2008-09
- 999 in 2009-10
- 275 from 1 July 2010 to 8 November 2010.

This includes people removed from immigration detention or who departed Australia from the community while holding a Bridging E visa. It does not include people who remained lawful while pursuing their claims for protection and departed Australia without any compliance action being taken by the Department.

The decision that the person was not owed protection may have occurred in a previous financial year to that in which the person left Australia.

(2) People subject to compliance related departure generally return to their country of citizenship or to a place where they have right of long term residence.

In 2008-09, people subject to a compliance related departure who had previously arrived lawfully and been found not to be owed protection were nationals of 66 different countries. Those countries with more than 20 nationals were the People's Republic of China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, South Korea, Philippines, Vietnam, Lebanon and Fiji.

In 2009-10, people subject to a compliance related departure who had previously arrived lawfully and been found not to be owed protection were nationals of 70 different countries. Those countries that had more than 20 nationals were the People's Republic of China, India, Malaysia, Indonesia, South Korea, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Fiji, Lebanon and Pakistan.

From 1 July 2010 to 8 November 2010, people subject to a compliance related departure who had previously arrived lawfully and been found not to be owed protection were nationals of 40 different countries. Those countries that had more than 20 nationals were the People's Republic of China and India.

The Department does not have the reporting resources to readily identify the countries to which failed asylum seekers have returned. The cost of returning failed asylum seekers, who have arrived documented at Australian air and sea ports, to their country of origin generally ranges from \$5,000 to \$15,000 per person. This 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).