

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: OCTOBER 2010

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(59) Program 2.1: Refugee and Humanitarian Assistance

Senator Cash (L&CA 58-59) asked:

- (1) How many asylum seekers currently held in Australian centres, either on Christmas Island or the mainland, were previously amongst the 255 passengers on board the boat detained by the Indonesian authorities at Merak?
- (2) What is their current status?
- (3) How many have been given visas?
- (4) How many have been refused?
- (5) How many on appeal? and
- (6) How many returned?

Answer:

The Department is unable to confirm the number of asylum seekers currently held either on Christmas Island or the mainland that were formerly aboard the vessel *Jaya Lestari 5* detained at the Indonesian port of Merak. The identification process of people from the vessel in Merak is impacted by several factors, including the accuracy and reliability of records of passenger information and the disembarkation of numerous passengers at Merak before records were completed. Australian authorities were not involved in disembarking individuals from that vessel. There are discrepancies between the passenger manifest prepared by Indonesian authorities, the subsequent manifest prepared by the International Organization for Migration and the list of asylum seekers currently in Australia who claim to have been aboard the *Java Lestari 5*.