

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES: 17 OCTOBER 2011

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(SE11/0196) Program 2.1: Refugee and Humanitarian Assistance

Senator Cash (L&CA 28-29) asked:

Provide a comparison between those returned voluntarily to their home country under the Pacific Solution and compare it to the returns of last three years, since the Pacific Solution was abolished.

Answer:

483 people processed at the Offshore Processing Centres on Nauru and Manus were found not to be refugees and returned voluntarily to their countries of origin.

The numbers of irregular maritime arrival asylum seekers who were voluntarily returned during the three program years following the closure of the Offshore Processing Centres were:

2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
13	124	78

By way of the requested comparison, 87 per cent (or 420) of the 483 people who returned voluntarily from Nauru or Manus Island were Afghans who returned to Afghanistan following the fall of the Taliban in 2001. This coincided with the voluntary return to Afghanistan of several million Afghans who had sought asylum in other countries in the period after 2001.

Only one person was voluntarily returned from Nauru since 2003. He was later resettled in Australia. During that same period, 376 people were resettled from Nauru. Manus Island was no longer operational during this period.