

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 15 October 2012

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(SE12/0559) PROGRAM – 4.3: Offshore Asylum Seeker Management

Senator Cash (written) asked:

Bridging visas: How many IMAs have been released on bridging visas since November last year? How many are employed. How many are receiving special benefit payments, and what is the total weekly cost of these payments? What has been the average period of time taken for an IMA on a bridging visas who has found employment to get a job?

Answer:

As at 30 September 2012, 5461 Irregular Maritime Arrivals (IMAs) had been granted a bridging visa.

The department does not collect information on employment rates for IMAs or the time taken for IMAs to gain employment.

IMAs on bridging visas may be eligible to receive support through the Community Assistance Support (CAS) program or the Asylum Seeker Assistance Scheme (ASAS). Both CAS and ASAS provide clients with income support payments limited to the equivalent of 89 per cent of the Centrelink Special Benefit.

Between 13 October 2011 and 30 September 2012, 5260 IMAs had been provided with income support under CAS or ASAS.

The department is unable to provide a total weekly cost for income support payments as numbers of clients vary from week to week.