

## **QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**

### **SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 19 November 2013**

#### **IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO**

#### **(SE13/0061) PROGRAM – 4.3: Offshore Asylum Seeker Management**

Senator Rhiannon (L&CA 118) asked:

Senator RHIANNON: My question actually was: have any UMAs been returned to Sri Lanka as a result of the policy without having their personal items returned to them? Are you confident in your reply? [...] Senator RHIANNON: Have there been any cases where the property has been returned to another person by mistake? Mr Bowles: I would have to take that on notice, Senator. Again, it is tagged in front of them and if there were things got confused in the process it is usually confused amongst individuals at a point in time when this exercise happens, but I can take it on notice. Senator RHIANNON: I think there are those incidents where your people get confused about who they are dealing with. Thank you for taking it on notice, and can you also take on notice whether that person has then been returned to Sri Lanka as a result of the enhanced screening process, so that the person has gone back with the wrong documentation.

*Answer:*

Where a detainee has been removed to their country of origin without having had their property returned to them, they are entitled to submit a complaint via the Global Feedback Unit. The department and the detention services provider investigate each complaint and work collaboratively to return the property to its owners.

Since the inception of the Enhanced Screening Process in October 2012, the department is aware of one complaint in relation to detainees being removed to Sri Lanka without their property.

This complaint concerned several persons who were removed without their property on a flight to Colombo in November 2012. Ground crew at Christmas Island airport considered the hold of the outbound aircraft too full to safely accommodate the property. The department later facilitated return of the property to the individuals in Sri Lanka.

This complaint did not relate to detainees being removed to Sri Lanka with the wrong travel documentation. All Sri Lankan nationals subject to removal either hold or are issued with a travel document which permits travel for return to Sri Lanka.

Sri Lankan authorities undertake a process on arrival to decide entry.