

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 19 November 2013

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(SE13/0098) PROGRAMME –

Senator Hanson-Young (Written) asked:

- a) How many people have been granted protection and resettled in Australia under the government's Afghan interpreter's humanitarian resettlement program?
- b) Can you please provide details of the assessment and resettlement process?
- c) How many families have been resettled under this program?
- d) How does this program assist the families of those killed in action whilst serving Australian forces?

Answer:

- a) To protect the security of our personnel in Afghanistan, the Department does not release details of the number of applications received or visas granted under the Afghan Locally Engaged Employee (LEE) visa programme. To do so has the potential to reveal the size and character of the LEE workforce in Afghanistan and therefore provide a level of information to those who would seek to harm the LEE.
- b) Afghan LEE applications are assessed in two stages. Firstly, LEE must obtain formal certification by the Minister of their employing agency that they are at significant risk of individual harm as a result of their support to Australia's whole of Government mission in Afghanistan.

Once certified, Afghan LEE can lodge an application for a Refugee and Humanitarian (Class XB) visa.

Afghan LEE applications are afforded the highest processing priority under the Humanitarian Programme, but are subject to the same assessment as other Refugee and Humanitarian visa applicants and must satisfy health, character and security requirements.

Afghan LEE will be settled throughout Australia having regard to any identified family links, availability of services and employment opportunities. Applicants granted a visa under the policy will have access to the same settlement services as other humanitarian entrants.

- c) Afghan LEE can include dependent family members in their visa application. For security and privacy reasons the Department does not release details of people resettled under this policy.

- d) Dependent family members of those killed in action whilst serving Australian forces cannot meet the requirements of the Afghan LEE visa programme but can be considered under the broader provisions of the Humanitarian Programme.