

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 19 November 2013

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(SE13/0413) PROGRAM – 4.3: Offshore Asylum Seeker Management

Senator Suzanne Boyce (L&CA 46) asked:

Senator BOYCE: I have just one follow-up question. We seem to have a lack of sync between when the contracts on the two processing centres will expire and the funding for those centres. How much funding are you going to need to go from 1 January to 30 June?

Mr Bowles: Again, that is part of the MYEFO process. It would be a little bit presumptuous of me to put that out there before going through a formal process.

Senator BOYCE: But you must know what it costs you to run the place for five months?

Mr Bowles: We know what it is costing to run the place to date. We obviously have to go back to government, through MYEFO, to get cost agreements through the finance department around what all of that might actually tally to. What I have said to date is that the contracts expire at this stage at the end of January. We are looking at options around whether we extend or renegotiate, or do we go to the market?

Senator BOYCE: Well, it is a bit late to go to the market even now, isn't it?

Mr Bowles: It is very hard to go to the market now. My assumption, based on the knowledge I have, without wanting to be definitive about this, is that we will require additional funding to get to the end of 2013-14 for the offshore contracts.

Senator BOYCE: Could you perhaps just tell us—and we can assume, I think, that is going to cost at least what it costs you monthly now—what is the current monthly cost?

Mr Bowles: I would have to find that out for you. I can come back to you on that number.

Senator BOYCE: If you have a quarterly cost that will do, or any sort of cost like that.

Answer:

From 1 July 2013 to 31 October 2013, the Department expended \$169.5 million for provision of services for offshore detention processing.