

Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee

The committee met on Monday, 11 February 2013 from 9.00 am to 11.02 pm.

The committee called the:

- department and agencies of the Immigration and Citizenship Portfolio, including the Migration Review Tribunal, the Refugee Review Tribunal and the Office of Migration Agents Registration Authority.

Among other issues, the following matters were discussed:

- the significant increased caseload of the MRT-RRT as well as the Tribunals' funding and staffing levels
- the country of origin of various asylum seekers and the success rate of their applications
- the agreements between the Australian Government and overseas counterparts in the establishment and management of offshore detention facilities in Nauru and Manus Island, Papua New Guinea
- the number of refugees settled from Malaysia and Indonesia
- skilled migration and different types of visas
- the details of the recent agreement with New Zealand in relation to the receipt of refugees from Australia
- the take-up rate and use of SkillSelect, an online system that allows potential skilled migrants to submit an expression of interest
- the cost-effectiveness of government contracts with state police and emergency services to the Pontville Detention Centre in Tasmania
- the treatment of detention centre residents and media access to immigration detention facilities in Nauru and Manus Island, Papua New Guinea
- the types of accommodation arrangements, recreational and hospital facilities in Nauru
- the visa status of asylum seekers on Manus Island as well as the security status of the island in relation to security service contract providers
- the level of benefits provided to people on bridging visas and the costs of their accommodation
- costs surrounding the use of chartered flights for the transport of asylum seekers to Nauru, Manus Island and Sri Lanka as well as domestic chartered transport costs
- the in-country treatment of Tamils in Sri Lanka and the level of engagement or cooperation the department has with the Sri Lankan government to limit the number of irregular maritime arrivals
- the profile of Sri Lankan irregular maritime arrivals and the corresponding acceptance rate
- the level of intelligence sharing and data exchange between Sri Lanka and Australia

- expenditure and costs relating to the Adult Migrant English Program.