

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 9 FEBRUARY 2010

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(124) Program 3.1: Border Management

Senator Humphries asked:

- (1) How do departmental officers verify documents?
- (2) How many travellers to Australia have presented with false or altered documents?
- (3) What happens to them?
- (4) Has anyone been prosecuted for presenting false or fraudulent documents?

Answer:

- (1) When seeking to verify clients' documents, departmental officers use their document fraud detection skills and locally available tools and systems and check with issuing authorities if warranted. Onshore, officers can also use the Document Verification Service (DVS) to verify identity details contained on Australian issued driver's licences and birth certificates against the issuing authority's database. This check also verifies that the document has not been cancelled or reported as lost or stolen.
- (2) The Department records the incidence of passenger arrivals with inappropriate documentation. That cohort includes persons whose travel document or visa has expired, persons whose travel document was lost, concealed or destroyed en route, impostors who present the travel document of another person, persons whose student visa was subject to automatic cancellation and persons presenting false or altered documents. The Department investigates cases of concern but does not publish statistics distinguishing the number of travellers who presented false or altered documents. In the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009, 147 travellers to Australia arrived with inappropriate documentation.
- (3) Inappropriately documented travellers to Australia may be refused clearance on arrival at the border. Those refused clearance are removed from Australia unless they are found to prima facie engage Australia's protection obligations.
- (4) Yes.