

Question on notice no. 43

Portfolio question number: AE22-043

2021-22 Additional estimates

Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, Home Affairs Portfolio

Senator Louise Pratt: asked the Department of Home Affairs on 14 February 2022

Senator PRATT: Can you please also provide advice to the committee on this. In a previous answer, we were told that, as of March last year, about 612 thousand persons from the IMA legacy case load had voluntarily departed Australia, that 390 persons from that case load had been removed and that 91 persons from that case load had died in Australia. Can you please give the current figure? In the new breakdown of the above figures, can you also advise how many were on TPVs and SHEVs when they departed, how many were refugees and what their country of origin was? Does the department gather information about the reasons for return or monitor those who do return, particularly those who have been found to be refugees? I'm keen to ensure that we're not in breach of our refoulement obligations. What does the department gather in relation to information about the reasons for return or the outcomes for those who do return? What assistance and advice are given to people who decide to return? Also, please take on notice, with regard to deaths in Australia from that IMA legacy case load, how many people have died in Australia, what visa they were on when they died and how many died by suicide or suspected suicide.

Mr Pezzullo: I suspect we'll need to take all of that on notice.

Mr Wilden: We'll need to take all those details on notice. You did mention those who have left. I'll just repeat my previous evidence. With people who choose to leave, it's a matter for them. We don't have any refoulement obligations if someone chooses to leave the country.

Senator PRATT: I know, but your refoulement obligations do go to the conditions you put on someone when they're here that make it unviable for them to stay. I'm done, thank you, Chair.

Answer —

Please see the attached answer.

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES
14 FEBRUARY 2022**

**Home Affairs Portfolio
Department of Home Affairs**

Program 2.3: Refugee and Humanitarian Assistance

AE22-043 - IMA legacy case load figures

Senator Louise Pratt asked:

Senator PRATT: Can you please also provide advice to the committee on this. In a previous answer, we were told that, as of March last year, about 6½ thousand persons from the IMA legacy case load had voluntarily departed Australia, that 390 persons from that case load had been removed and that 91 persons from that case load had died in Australia. Can you please give the current figure? In the new breakdown of the above figures, can you also advise how many were on TPVs and SHEVs when they departed, how many were refugees and what their country of origin was? Does the department gather information about the reasons for return or monitor those who do return, particularly those who have been found to be refugees? I'm keen to ensure that we're not in breach of our refoulement obligations. What does the department gather in relation to information about the reasons for return or the outcomes for those who do return? What assistance and advice are given to people who decide to return? Also, please take on notice, with regard to deaths in Australia from that IMA legacy case load, how many people have died in Australia, what visa they were on when they died and how many died by suicide or suspected suicide.

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Senator PRATT: I know, but your refoulement obligations do go to the conditions you put on someone when they're here that make it unviable for them to stay. I'm done, thank you, Chair.

Answer:

As at 31 December 2021:

- 6,745 Illegal Maritime Arrivals (IMAs) have voluntarily departed from Australia.
- 402 IMAs have been removed from Australia.
- 100 IMAs have died in Australia (according to departmental systems listing the latest resident address as in Australia). The Department does not record time of death or cause of death in a reportable format.

People who hold any type of visa, including a protection visa, may choose to voluntarily depart Australia. Australia's international obligations do not extend to stopping people from departing if they choose to do so.

People who are removed from immigration detention do not hold a visa.

The Return and Reintegration Assistance Program (RRAP) provides return assistance and reintegration assistance subject to eligible individuals.

Return Assistance can include returns counselling, travel and transit assistance, travel document applications, accommodation, and cash assistance for incidentals.

- Returns counselling provides information on voluntary return and the current situation in the country of return at the earliest stage of the process. Reason to return is usually discussed by Service Providers during the counselling session. Clients are not required to disclose a 'reason to return'. The key condition for the provision of RRAP is that the individual wishes to return voluntarily. RRAP Service Providers do not collect statistical information on the reason to return.
- The travel and transit assistance component provides airfares to the returning country and in-country transport assistance. Limited accommodation support is available at any stage of the return journey and a transit meal allowance may also be included.
- Cash assistance (up to \$100.00 AUD per person) can also be provided, based on a returnee's individual circumstances, to meet immediate post-arrival needs such as food, phone calls and other incidental expenses.

Reintegration assistance is available to eligible IMA returnees to support a sustainable return. The assistance is tailored to an individual's circumstances, such as health, financial status, family composition or location of return. Reintegration assistance includes the development of a Reintegration Assistance Plan to deliver the most appropriate post-arrival assistance to meet individual circumstances.