

Question on notice no. 27

Portfolio question number: BE22-027

2022-23 Budget estimates

Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, Home Affairs Portfolio

Senator Karen Grogan: asked the Department of Home Affairs on 4 April 2022—

Senator GROGAN: Following on from Senator Scarr's questions, can you tell us how many people in Nauru have taken up long-term Nauruan visas and also how many people are in PNG?

Mr Ablong: In Nauru there are none who've taken up long-term Nauruan residence. As to Papua New Guinea, I closed my folder; if you will give me a minute—

Senator SCARR: Just so we're clear, there are other 10-year visas, aren't there, in Nauru?

Mr Ablong: Yes, there are.

Senator SCARR: So, you are answering on permanent residency?

Mr Ablong: Permanent residency.

Senator KENEALLY: For clarification, my understanding was there was a 10-year visa?

Mr Ablong: That's correct.

Senator KENEALLY: You're saying nobody in Nauru—

Mr Ablong: No, sorry. I will be more specific. On the 10 year-visa there are a number. I don't have that exact figure with me. In terms of permanent residency in Nauru, there are none.

Senator KENEALLY: The question was about long-term visas. My memory was that there was a 10-year and possibly even a 20-year?

Mr Pezzullo: I think they've gone to 10. Can we just take on notice, so that we are absolutely accurate in our evidence, and we'll distinguish between anyone on a duration visa, whether it's 5, 10 or 15. I think it's 10. From memory—and we'll need to check this, Mr Ablong—I think under Nauruan law there's a prohibition on pathway to citizenship, if I recall it. So, I think that answer would be 'zero'. But we'll get that—

Senator KENEALLY: That wasn't the question. The question was on the long-term visas.

Mr Pezzullo: We'll be very precise in the terms of our response.

Mr Ablong: I apologise. I don't have that figure with me.

Senator GROGAN: Thank you.

Senator KENEALLY: What about PNG?

Mr Pezzullo: And PNG.

Senator KENEALLY: How many people are in PNG?

Mr Ablong: As you know, we ended our regional reprocessing arrangement with PNG on 31 December. As of 1 January, individuals in PNG effectively are resettled in PNG unless they're looking for third-country resettlement through other processes. So, if they were already engaged in the US process, they could continue that pathway. If they were under the relationship with the UNHCR, they could continue that pathway. But those who are left at that stage would effectively resettle in Papua New Guinea. There were 105 of those.

Senator GROGAN: Maybe you can give us that full breakdown when you bring back the other numbers as well?

Mr Pezzullo: We'll take on notice those in Nauru on some form of duration visa and how many effectively resettled in PNG as at 1 January 2022.

Mr Ablong: We can do that.

Answer —

Please see the attached answer.

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
BUDGET ESTIMATES
MARCH / APRIL 2022**

**Home Affairs Portfolio
Department of Home Affairs**

Program 1.5 : Regional Cooperation

BE22-027 - Take up of Long-term Visas

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Answer:

In November 2016, the Government of Nauru confirmed it would allow transitory persons under regional processing arrangements to remain in Nauru for up to 20 years and would ensure their lawful status over that time. This policy setting has been coined a 20 year visa.

In practice, there is no 20 year visas. Transitory persons whom have been determined by the Government of Nauru to be in need of international protection are granted a Temporary Settlement visa, which is valid for six months and renewed on payment by the Department of Home Affairs. Transitory persons whom have not been found by the Government of Nauru to be in need of international protection or whose refugee status process continues are granted a Regional Processing Centre visa, which is valid for three months and renewed on payment by the Department of Home Affairs.

Temporary Settlement and Regional Processing Centre visas are currently the only visa products available for transitory persons in Nauru. There is currently no permanent settlement pathway or permanent residency for transitory persons in Nauru.

The Australian Government remains focused on supporting the Government of Nauru to resolve the regional processing caseload, including through resettlement outcomes to the United States, New Zealand and Canada (pursued independently of Australian Government). The Government of Nauru will allow the ongoing stay of transitory persons in Nauru until they achieve durable migration outcomes.

As at 31 January 2022, there were 112 transferees in Nauru; 83 transitory persons were on a Temporary Settlement visa and 29 transitory persons were on a Regional Processing Centre visa.

As at 31 December 2021, 105 individuals were remaining in Papua New Guinea (PNG).

The Department no longer monitors or reports on the status of the cohort remaining in PNG.

As at 31 December 2021, the Department was aware of approximately 75 individuals in PNG pursuing third country resettlement pathways, including United States and Canadian Private Sponsorship of Refugees Programme (pursued independently of the Australian Government). Individuals continue to explore these options. Individuals not pursuing third country resettlement options are able to settle permanently in Papua New Guinea and would receive assistance from the PNG Government.