

Question on notice no. 96

Portfolio question number: SE25-0096

2025-26 Supplementary Budget estimates

Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, Home Affairs Portfolio

Senator Claire Chandler: asked the Department of Home Affairs on 8 October 2025

Senator CHANDLER: How many Nauruan visas has the Australian government applied for under the MOU dealing with the NZYQ cohort?

Ms Sharp: I will need to take that question on notice. The reason for that is that it's really going very much to an operational matter for the department, in terms of the rate and cadence at which visas are being applied for and dealt with.

Senator CHANDLER: I would have thought the department would have had a pretty good guess that this topic was going to come up at estimates. Can I also have on notice what dates those visas were applied for. Would it be fair to assume that you've applied for a visa for this entire cohort at this point in time or for only part of that cohort?

Ms Sharp: Senator-

Senator CHANDLER: Can you at least confirm for me roughly what percentage it might be?

Ms Sharp: We're working in a planned way to address this. We need to do this in a way that will be sustainable for both systems-the Australian system and the Nauruan system-and, in that regard, it wouldn't be correct to assume we've applied for all of the visas in one go.

Senator CHANDLER: So you haven't applied for all of the visas for this cohort yet, despite the fact they're incredibly dangerous individuals that we need to get off our streets.

Ms Foster: I think what Ms Sharp was saying before was not that she did not know the answer but that she was precluded from giving the answer so that she could protect the operational and safety aspects of the work we do, as we are detaining people who have had visas issued.

Senator CHANDLER: But, from the sounds of it, as the evidence of the department here tonight, the entire cohort has not yet been dealt with in terms of visa applications.

Ms Sharp: That's correct. The entire cohort has not yet been dealt with.

Senator CHANDLER: I'm assuming you're not also not going to be able to tell me how many individuals have been granted visas under the MOU.

Ms Sharp: That's right. We'll take that on notice to consider the operational impact of providing that information.

Senator CHANDLER: Are you able to tell me whether any individuals in the NZYQ cohort have left Australia for that Nauru yet?

Ms Sharp: No.

Senator CHANDLER: Sorry, you're not able to tell me?

Ms Sharp: I'd take that on notice in the same way.

Senator CHANDLER: Again, if you're taking it on notice, it would be useful to know when those individuals left this country. Is there a limit to how many individuals Nauru can receive at any one time, and is there anything stopping Nauru from taking all 358 people at once?

Ms Foster: I think Ms Sharp just said that the operational planning is being done in such a way as to ensure that it is manageable for both systems, both the offices we have available, to plan and execute the operations and Nauru's capacity to receive them.

Senator CHANDLER: How many of the cohort that were released into the community before they were deemed NZYQ affected have since been redetained awaiting uplift to Nauru?

Ms Sharp: I need to give you the same answer that we need to take it on notice so we can consider the operational impact of disclosing that.

Senator CHANDLER: When you say 'consider the operational impact of disclosing that', what do you mean?

Ms Sharp: The act of going and detaining these individuals is a risky operation for our staff. Putting into the public domain when, where and how many of these operations are happening may make it more difficult for our officers to do that work.

Answer —

Please see the attached answer.

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES
OCTOBER 2025**

**Home Affairs Portfolio
Department of Home Affairs**

Program 2.2: Visas

SE25-0096 - NZYQ cohort transferred to Nauru

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Ms Sharp: The act of going and detaining these individuals is a risky operation for our staff. Putting into the public domain when, where and how many of these operations are happening may make it more difficult for our officers to do that work.

Answer:

Detail about the number of Long Term Stay Visas applied for by the Department of Home Affairs in relation to the Third Country Reception Arrangement is subject to a Public Interest Immunity (PII) claim made by the Minister for Home Affairs, the Hon Tony Burke MP, on 1 December 2025.

The number of Long Term Stay Visas granted by the Government of Nauru in relation to the Third Country Reception Arrangement is subject to a Public Interest Immunity (PII) claim made by the Minister for Home Affairs, the Hon Tony Burke MP, on 1 December 2025.

As at 31 August 2025, zero individuals who held a Nauruan Long Term Stay Visa had been removed to Nauru.

Detail on the management of the NZYQ-affected cohort in relation to the Third Country Reception Arrangement is subject to a Public Interest Immunity (PII) claim made by the Minister for Home Affairs, the Hon Tony Burke MP, on 1 December 2025.