

## QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

**ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING: 24 March 2017**

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

**(AE17/294) - 'Fast-track' - Programme 2.3: Visas**

Senator Pratt, Louise (L&CA) written:

How many asylum seekers have been contacted since the last estimates to advise they are eligible to apply for assessment under the so-called 'Fast-Track' process?

How many applications have been received since the last estimates under the so-called 'Fast-Track' process? How many applications have been assessed since the last estimates under the so-called 'Fast-Track' process? How many decisions have been made since the last estimates under the so-called 'Fast-Track' process? How many positive? How many negative?

How many applications have been referred to the Immigration Assessment Authority? How many decisions have been made by the IAA? How many positive and negative?

Do asylum seekers eligible to apply under the so-called 'Fast-Track' process receive legal advice/support as a matter of course?

Has the lack of legal support for applicants lead to an increase in the time taken to process applications?

*Answer:*

*How many asylum seekers have been contacted since the last estimates to advise they are eligible to apply for assessment under the so-called 'Fast-Track' process?*

As reported at the last Senate Estimates hearing, all eligible Illegal Maritime Arrivals in Australia have been invited to apply for either a Temporary Protection visa (TPV) or a Safe Haven Enterprise visa (SHEV), following the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection lifting the application bar.

IMAs are expected to lodge an application for a TPV or a SHEV, and to have their claims for protection assessed and their status in Australia resolved. All IMAs may lodge an application at any time.

*How many applications have been received since the last estimates under the so-called 'Fast-Track' process?*

*How many applications have been assessed since the last estimates under the so-called 'Fast-Track' process?*

*How many decisions have been made since the last estimates under the so-called 'Fast-Track' process?*

*How many positive?*

*How many negative?*

Between 31 January 2017 (data date used for IMA figures reported at the February Senate Estimates) and 24 March 2017, under the fast track processing, the Department has:

- received 2,382 applications from IMAs;
- assessed 1,085 applications from IMAs; and
- finally determined 1,029 applications from IMAs, of which:
  - 782 were grants for a protection visa; and
  - 247 were refusals for a protection visa.

*How many applications have been referred to the Immigration Assessment Authority?*

*How many decisions have been made by the IAA?*

*How many positive and negative?*

At 24 March 2017, under the fast track processing, the Immigration Assessment Authority has:

- received 2,116 applications from IMAs;
- made a decision on 1,204 applications from IMAs, of which:
  - 986 applications have been affirmed; and
  - 218 applications have been remitted back to the Department.

*Do asylum seekers eligible to apply under the so-called 'Fast-Track' process receive legal advice/support as a matter of course?*

The Australian Government funds application assistance for IMAs who are:

- highly vulnerable
- unaccompanied minors, or
- held in a detention environment.

Since 2015, more than 3,500 IMAs have been offered access to assistance funded through the Primary Application Information Service (PAIS).

*Has the lack of legal support for applicants lead to an increase in the time taken to process applications?*

Applications are assessed on their individual merits. There is significant variation in the time taken to process and finalise each application, depending on the clients' circumstances. Legal support has not been identified by the Department as a key driver in overall processing time.