

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING : 25 May 2015

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(BE15/173) - PNG - Refugees - Programme 2.4: Refugee and Humanitarian Assistance

Senator Hanson-Young, Sarah (L&CA) written:

Of the 506 Refugee Status Interim Determination assessments at Manus Island, there were 289 positive and 217 negative assessments. Of the 289 positive assessments, 118 refugees have been given a positive final determination.

- What is delaying the 78 positively-assessed refugees from receiving a positive final determination from the Minister? Are non-protection relation issues (e.g. the skills that a person would bring to PNG) a factor in the final decision?
- Has anyone completed the merits review process, and if so, what is the breakdown (positive and negative)?
- Do people detained in the Manus RPCs (positively determined refugees and those still in process) have access to phones and email? What is the nature of this access?
- What is the long-term option for accommodation, employment and settlement services for people found to be refugees?

Answer:

The Government of Papua New Guinea (PNG) is responsible for the refugee determination in PNG. The process is managed by the PNG Immigration and Citizenship Services Authority (ICSA). The merits review panel commenced in March 2015 and is yet to hand down its first decision.

PNG ICSA provides all transferees and refugees residing at the Manus Regional Processing Centre (RPC) access to telephones and the internet. Depending on the circumstances this may be up to three times per week.

Settlement arrangements are a matter for the Government of PNG. Transferees determined to be refugees by the PNG Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration are invited to apply for a refugee visa and may choose to transfer from the RPC to the East Lorengau Refugee Transit Centre (ELRTC) where they are able to come and go.

Refugees receive a number of services at the ELRTC to assist them to transition to life in PNG, including:

- basic welfare assistance including a living allowance;

- cultural orientation and language training (English and Tok Pisin);
- access to a health clinic and local health services;
- torture and trauma counselling; and
- case management support.

Longer-term arrangements for employment, accommodation and settlement will be implemented by the Government of PNG following the approval of its refugee policy.