

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING : 23 May 2017

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(BE17/104) - Muslim migrants - number that have entered australia since change of government in 2013 - Programme 2.2: Migration

Senator Roberts, Malcolm (L&CA 54) asked:

Senator ROBERTS: I refer you to your single paragraph response to my previous estimates questions that you took on notice on 27 February. In my previous questions I asked: ... how many Muslims have come into the country since you stopped the boats in 2013 and whether or not you do check on their ability and willingness, once they have settled in Australia, to assimilate and integrate?

In response you merely rattled off your department's mantra that:

Australia's migration ... is non-discriminatory. The Department does not require applicants to state their religion as part of the visa process, except where they choose to disclose this information as part of a protection claim.

That does not answer my question. Whether or not you or your department is indiscriminate in allowing people into this country is in itself an issue of concern but that is irrelevant to what I asked. Equally, if applicants are not required to state their religion, that does not prevent you from providing me with the number of individuals who did. So, again, I ask you to please provide me with all your available data on the number of Muslims coming to Australia even if this is not complete. To claim that you cannot supply anything because what you provide me would not be complete, in my view, is not valid. So could you please provide that?

Mr Pezzullo: We will take that on notice.

Answer:

A person's religion is not a factor in the consideration of their eligibility for a permanent residence visa under Australia's Migration Programme. This reflects the non-discriminatory nature of Australia's migration and humanitarian programmes historically.

In this context, Migration Programme applicants are not required to declare their religion as part of the application process. As this information is not collected, it is not possible to report on it.

If at any stage of a visa application process the religion of an applicant or a sponsor is disclosed to the department this information is not recorded in manner to produce a report.