

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES – 20 OCTOBER 2014

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(SE14/275) PROGRAMME – Internal Product

Senator Ludwig (Written) asked:

Since September 7, 2013:

Have any existing services provided by the department / agency moved from being free to a user-pay service? Have any additional fees been placed on existing services?

If yes please provide a list and include:

- a. Name of the fee and a short description of what it covers.
- b. How much is the fee (and is it a flat fee or a percentage of the service).
- c. The date the fee came into place.
- d. Were any reviews requested, commenced or complemented into the benefits and drawbacks of attaching the fee to the service? If yes, please detail and provide a copy of the review.
- i. What consultation was carried out before the fee was put into place?
- ii. How was the fee put into place (e.g. through legislation, regulation changes etc.)?
- iii. What justification is there for the fee?

Answer:

No services have gone from free to user-pay; however the department introduced a surcharge for fees and charges paid by credit card.

- a. The Fee is called credit card surcharge. The credit card surcharge was introduced to recover credit card fees imposed on the department by credit card providers Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Japan Credit Bureau (JCB) and Diners.
- b. The fee is calculated based on the estimated cost charged to the department by the credit card providers.
- c. The credit card surcharge was implemented on 19 April 2014.
- d. No
 - i. In formulating the credit card surcharge, the department ensured that it is consistent with the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) guidelines. The department also consulted with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Department of Finance, Migration Institute of Australia, the Law Council of Australia and key stakeholders and representative organisations in the migration advice sector.
 - ii. The credit card surcharge was put into place through amendments to the Migration and Citizenship regulations.
 - iii. Cost recovery under the Australian Government Cost Recovery Guidelines issued by the Department of Finance.