

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES – 20 OCTOBER 2014

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(SE14/397) PROGRAMME – 2.1: and 2.2: Refugee and Humanitarian Assistance

Senator Carr (Written) asked:

An extra \$27.8 million will be provided in 2014-15, will this continue in 2015-16 and beyond?

If not, why not?

Is this an overall increase in funding for both the Asylum Seeker Assistance Scheme and the Community Assistance Support Programme, since previous financial years?

Say, the last three years?

What is the current eligibility criteria for this support?

Has that changed since the Coalition came to Government? If so, how?

I note that this funding is offset from the Migration Program – allocation of places for 2014-15.

Will this measure result in less places being offered in 2014-15?

Answer:

A decision about the total funding for the 2015-16 financial year has not yet been made.

The additional funding provided in 2014-15 was required to support a greater number of people accessing the Asylum Seeker Assistance Scheme (ASAS). Changes in Government policy in relation to applications for protection by illegal maritime arrivals have resulted in an increase in the number of people receiving support for longer periods.

The ASAS and Community Assistance Support (CAS) programmes provide asylum seekers living in the community on Bridging visas with appropriate care and support. The eligibility criteria for both the ASAS and CAS have remained unchanged since the change of government.

To be eligible for either programme:

- the recipient must be engaging with the department to resolve their immigration status; and
- be in financial hardship; or
- satisfy one or more of the vulnerability criteria.

The measure has not resulted in less places being offered in the Migration Programme in 2014-15.