

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING : 17 October 2016

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(SE16/130) - Fast-track applications - Programme 2.4: Refugee and Humanitarian Assistance

Senator Carr, Kim (L&CA) written:

In relation to 'fast-track applications:

How many asylum seekers have been contacted in 2015/16 to advise they are eligible to apply for assessment under the so-called 'Fast-Track' process?

Please provide figures for the last five years.

How many applications have been received in 2015/16 under the so-called 'Fast-Track' process?

Please provide figures for the last five years.

How many applications have been assessed in 2015/16 under the so-called 'Fast-Track' process?

How many decisions have been made in 2015/16 under the so-called 'Fast-Track' process?

Of those applications, how many were positive and how many were negative?

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

How many decisions have been made by the IAA?

Of those, how many were positive and how many were negative?

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

If not, why not? and if yes, what types of support were offered?

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 in 2015/16 to advise they are eligible to apply for assessment under the so-called 'Fast-Track' process? Please provide figures for the last five years.

The Fast Track assessment process was introduced in 2014 through the *Migration and Maritime Powers Legislation Amendment (Resolving the Asylum Legacy Caseload) Act 2014* reforms which commenced in July 2015. As at 20 October 2016, 21,276 had been invited to apply for a Temporary Protection visa or Safe Haven Enterprise visa.

How many applications have been received in 2015/16 under the so-called 'Fast-Track' process? Please provide figures for the last five years.

In 2014/15, 84 Temporary Protection visa and Safe Haven Enterprise visa applications were lodged under the Fast Track assessment process. In 2015/16, 6,295 were lodged.

How many applications have been assessed under the so-called 'Fast-Track' process? How many decisions have been made in 2015/16 under the so-called 'Fast-Track' process? Of these applications how many were positive and how many were negative?

As at 29 September 2016, 4,768 applications made by IMAs within the IMA legacy caseload have finally determined decisions. Of these, in 2015/16, 238 TPV or SHEV applications by Fast Track applicants were granted and 94 were refused following review by the Immigration Assessment Authority. A further 6,047 cases were on-hand at various stages of assessment as at 30 June 2016.

How many applications have been referred to the Immigration Assessment authority?

As at 20 October 2016, all 1,065 persons subject to Fast Track processing arrangements whose applications were refused by the department and are not an excluded applicant were automatically referred to the Immigration Assessment Authority (IAA) for an independent merits review.

How many decisions have been made by the IAA? Of these how many were positive and how many were negative?

From when the IAA commenced on 18 April 2015 to 20 October 2016, 485 decisions have been made by the IAA with 385 affirming the decision and 96 being remitted back to the Department for further consideration. Four decisions have been otherwise finalised.

Do asylum seekers eligible to apply under the so-called 'Fast-Track' process receive legal advice or support as a matter of course? If not, why not, what types of support were offered? Has the lack of legal support for applicants led to an increase in the time taken to process applications?

Illegal arrivals (including IMAs and UAAs) may be eligible for protection visa application assistance under the Primary Application Information Service (PAIS) if they:

- are an unaccompanied minor; or
- are an adult who the Department considers to be exceptionally vulnerable.

The Department is rigorously assessing all applications on their individual merits against the requirements in the *Migration Act 1958*, using the most current and relevant country of origin information. The assessment includes national security, health and identity checks. The processing time varies significantly from case to case and is affected by characteristics such as:

- the complexity of individual claims;
- the number of applicants;
- the age of applicants;
- time take for applicants to respond to requests for information; and
- security, character, identity and health requirements.