

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING : 17 October 2016

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(SE16/139) - Visa overstayers - Programme 2.3: Visas

Senator Carr, Kim (L&CA) written:

In relation to people who overstay their visa:

How many people in Australia have currently overstayed their visa?

How many people who overstayed their visa were removed from Australia in 2015/16? Please provide details for the last five years.

Has there been an increase in the number of people overstaying their visa?

How do most people that overstay their visa arrive in Australia?

What is the longest amount of time that someone has overstayed their visa?

What is the average amount of time that someone overstays their visa?

What steps does DIBP undertake to locate and remove someone who has overstayed their visa?

Given the increase in numbers, what measures is the DIBP undertaking to remove people?

Answer:

How many people in Australia have currently overstayed their visa?

As at 30 June 2016, there were 64,600 unlawful non-citizens (UNCs) in the community who had overstayed a visa or had their visa cancelled onshore. This figure is an estimate only and is captured yearly.*

How many people who overstayed their visa were removed from Australia in 2015/16? Please provide details for the last five years.

In 2015–16, 10,944 people were removed from Australia after overstaying their visa or following cancellation of their visa. Details for the preceding four years are:

- 2014–15 - 11,097 people
- 2013–14 - 10,440 people
- 2012–13 - 9116 people
- 2011–12 - 8541 people*

Has there been an increase in the number of people overstaying their visa?

As a proportion of the number of temporary entrants arriving in Australia, the number of temporary entrants who overstayed their visa in 2015–16 has decreased significantly.*

How do most people that overstay their visa arrive in Australia?

Data pertaining to the visa held on arrival is not reported against, however of the estimated 64,600 UNCs in Australia on 30 June 2016, 47,200 held a visa in the Visitor category (including those arriving on an Electronic Travel Authority) at the time of becoming unlawful.*

What is the longest amount of time that someone has overstayed their visa?

As at 30 June 2016, the longest period of time that someone remained an unlawful non-citizen onshore was 15 years or more.*

What is the average amount of time that someone overstays their visa?

Based on recent analysis of Departmental records, the estimated average amount of time that a non-citizen overstays a visa is 97 days.*

What steps does DIBP undertake to locate and remove someone who has overstayed their visa?

The Department fosters an environment of voluntary compliance through:

- provision of information when a person is applying for and granted a visa regarding visa conditions and expiry date
- information services for visa holders to check their visa details and conditions during their stay in Australia through the Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO) system, the MyVEVO app and ImmiAccount
- the Community Status Resolution Service (CSRS) which provides a range of support services to help resolve the immigration status of those who have overstayed their visa
- awareness campaigns and outreach activities with communities aimed at encouraging visa holders to check their conditions, and if they become unlawful how to engage with the Department to resolve their immigration status

Unlawful non-citizens who have no lawful right to remain in Australia will be removed as soon as reasonably practicable. A range of events and situations may impact on the Department's ability to progress removal including litigation, inability to obtain travel documents from the country of origin, the removee's health and other case complexities.

Targeted field compliance activity is regularly undertaken by Australian Border Force officers to locate unlawful non-citizens (UNCs) in the community in response to allegations or referrals received. Allegations are received through a variety of channels into the Department, including:

- the Border Watch Allegation and Referral Team (BWART), and
- The Immigration Status Service (ISS) that provides status checks in support of state and territory law enforcement and the Australian Federal Police. ISS can also assist in regularising a UNCs immigration status.

The Department also works closely with other government agencies including through the sharing of information to locate unlawful non-citizens.

To reduce the number of UNCs and curb further increases, the Department has commenced a number of initiatives including; contacting current UNCs directly to assist them in resolving their immigration status and using digital technologies to push key messages to current and future visa holders reminding them of their visa expiry date.

Given the increase in numbers, what measures is the DIBP undertaking to remove people?

Refer to answer above.

*This data has been provided by the Deputy Chief Statistician at the Department of Immigration and Border Protection. Any changes to the content must be cleared through the Deputy Chief Statistician.