

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARINGS: 21 FEBRUARY 2011

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(256) Program 4.3: Offshore Asylum Seeker Management

Senator Hanson-Young asked:

For the past three and next three financial years how much has Australia spent/planned to spend on keeping asylum seekers in the community?

Answer:

It is assumed this question relates to the community detention program. For the past three financial years (2007-08 to 2009-10) the residence determination (also known as community detention) program was relatively small, with a maximum of 80 to 90 clients and an average of around 20 to 30 clients at any one time. Given its relatively small size, costings relating to this program were included with the financial records for the broader detention program.

In relation to the next three financial years, it is too early in the program to provide meaningful estimates. Since the expansion of the program was announced on 18 October 2010, the Department and the program's lead service provider, the Australian Red Cross, have been actively ramping up the program. Only after the program is operating at full capacity and has been running for a reasonable period of time can meaningful cost estimates be provided.