

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 21 FEBRUARY 2011

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(305) Program 4.3: Offshore Asylum Seeker Management

Senator Cash asked:

What is the average length of detention anticipated for Irregular Maritime Arrivals (IMAs) used to frame the budget estimate for programme 4.3 in 2010-11? How does this compare with 2009-10 and how is it used to frame the budget estimate in 2011-12?

Answer.

Irregular Maritime Arrival (IMA) cost estimates are dynamic and are influenced by a range of factors including the number and rate of arrivals, processing times, rejection rates, the number of families or unaccompanied minors. While there is no generic average length of detention anticipated for IMAs used to frame the budget estimate for program 4.3, the length of stay is a consideration in respect to the operational costs for the care and management of IMAs. Other factors taken into account in the overall cost include:

- Where the client is detained and the costs associated with that facility;
- Health issues and therefore health care required;
- The need for interpreters;
- Escort costs;
- Transport costs;
- Costs associated with any appeals;
- Security costs/issues;
- Immigration Advice & Application Assistance Scheme (IAAAS) costs; and
- Red Cross and Life Without Barriers costs.

The average length of stay of IMAs in 2009-10 financial year was 101 days. As at 28 February 2011, the average length of time for a client in detention since 1 July 2010 has been 162 days. This data has been factored into the estimated costs for the management and care of IMAs in 2010-11 financial year, as published in the 2010-11 Portfolio Additional Estimates Statement.

All factors as outlined above will be taken into account when calculating the 2011-12 estimates.