

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING: 13 FEBRUARY 2012

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(AE12/0397) Program 4.2: Onshore Detention Network

Senator Cash asked:

What are the conditions attached to each of those bridging visa sub-classes? What welfare, housing and medical payments and services have been made available? Have all of those released on bridging visas been given work rights? Which visa has been the most used? Has the department consulted with other agencies and departments who are likely to feel the brunt of this new policy? What additional funding have they said is required?

Answer:

The only type of Bridging visa which Irregular Maritime Arrival (IMA) clients are granted is a Subclass 050 – Bridging (General) visa (BVE 050).

All IMAs on BVEs are managed by the department and there are specific conditions attached to a BVE. These conditions include regularly reporting to the department and providing two working days' notice prior to changing address. According to Clause 050.617 of the Migration Regulations 1994 (the Regulations), the No Work condition (8101) is discretionary and is not being applied to these grants.

BVE holders, on release from detention, may be able to access temporary support on an as-needed basis from DIAC funded programs, the Asylum Seeker Assistance Scheme and the Community Assistance Support program, both administered by the Australian Red Cross. Such temporary support may include limited income support, assistance to source appropriate and sustainable accommodation, and access to basic and essential medical services. BVE holders are not eligible for public housing or any benefit payments through Centrelink.

Since the Government's announcement on 13 October 2011, the department has undertaken detailed and ongoing consultations with a range of relevant stakeholders including the NGO sector and Federal, State and Territory Governments to ensure all parties are fully informed about the IMA BVE program. Those consultations have included details of the support arrangements provided through the department and its service providers. DIAC continues to work closely with other departments and agencies in examining the possible implications for their programs, but no detailed proposals for additional funding have been received or agreed as yet.