

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARINGS: 11 February 2013

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(AE13/0494) PROGRAM – 2.1: Refugee and Humanitarian Assistance

Senator Hanson-Young (Written) asked:

Regarding Afghan interpreter visas - How and when will the new visas for Afghan interpreters be rolled out? Have any visas been granted so far and if so how many interpreters, including family members, have been resettled in Australia or in the processing of being resettled in Australia? How will potential applicants be alerted to the existence of this visa?

Answer:

A joint press statement by the Minister for Defence and the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship was released on 13 December 2012. The press release and further information on Australia's visa policy for at-risk Afghan employees is available on the department's website at <http://www.immi.gov.au/visas/humanitarian/offshore/afghanistan-lees-faqs.htm>

This was widely reported in Afghanistan.

No visa applications have been lodged and no visas granted under this policy as at 1 March 2013.

Relevant Australian agencies in Afghanistan work closely with their locally engaged employees and will make potentially eligible applicants aware of Australia's visa policy for-at risk Afghan employees.