

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - 25 FEBRUARY 2014

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(AE14/123) PROGRAMME – 4.1: Visa Compliance and Status resolution

Senator Carr (Written) asked:

How many people on bridging visas have not had their visas renewed on expiry? Why have their visas not been renewed?

How long was the period between expiry and renewal? Please detail the time periods and average time without a visa renewal.

Why has the department not been able to renew these visas on expiry?

How will they be dealt with upon the expiry of the bridging visa?

Answer:

As at 25 February 2014, there were 11 812 illegal maritime arrivals in the community whose Bridging E visas had ceased.

Consideration of the grant of further Bridging E visas was suspended, pending finalisation of legislative and administrative arrangements for the implementation of a Code of Behaviour for Bridging E visa holders.

Operational information indicates that the average time for which illegal maritime arrivals who are awaiting the grant of a further Bridging E visa have been unlawful is 120 days.

Illegal maritime arrivals affected by delays in granting further Bridging E visas who become unlawful as a result, but who meet all other eligibility requirements, continue to be eligible for the asylum seeker support programmes and associated financial and health support services through the Community Assistance Support (CAS) and Asylum Seeker Assistance Scheme (ASAS).

The process of assessing and granting further Bridging E visas to illegal maritime arrivals in the community whose previous Bridging E visa has ceased has recommenced and is subject to each individual aged 18 years and older signing the Code of Behaviour.