

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 27-28 May 2013

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(BE13/0078) PROGRAM – 4.3: Offshore Asylum Seeker Management

Senator Rhiannon (L&CA 18) asked:

Senator RHIANNON: Are there operational procedures in place to ensure that family members who arrive separately in Australia or in Australia's excise zones by irregular maritime means are reunited? If there are procedures, what are they?

Ms Larkins: To be clear I would probably have to take that on notice. The general principle is that yes, we do take family composition into consideration in our decision making. But it would be better if I gave you a fuller answer.

Senator RHIANNON: If you could take it on notice, that would be appreciated. Is there a time period within which these procedures must take place, considering that we are talking about family?

Ms Larkins: I will include that in my answer.

Answer:

The Department supports the principle of accommodating family members together where feasible and appropriate. If family members have arrived in Australia or Australia's excise zones as Irregular Maritime Arrival, and the client's family members are already at another immigration detention facility, consideration is given to reuniting family members in the same location once initial processing has been completed and in accordance with government policy. Operational or personal circumstances may prevent a family unit being placed together for a period of time.