

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 1 November 2005

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(177) Output 1.5: Offshore Asylum Seeker Management

Senator Nettle asked:

Please explain discrepancy between QON answer 47 November 2004 Estimates and QON answer 139 February 2005 regarding Australian funding of IOM camps in Indonesia to house asylum seekers.

November 2004 answer:

“The Australian government does not pay the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and/or the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to run an asylum seeker camp in Lombok, Indonesia.”

February 2005 answer:

(2)(a) The Australian Government funds the International Organisation for Migration to accommodate asylum seekers in Indonesia.

Which answer is true? Why are these answers completely different?

Provide detail of how the relationship between the Australian Government and IOM and also UNHCR in Indonesia in regard to these asylum seekers. Include detail of all financial grants including specific purpose and tied grants.

Answer:

There is no discrepancy. There is no camp on Lombok. The answer to Question on Notice 47 of November 2004 included advice on the arrangements followed by IOM to provide: “.. practical support such as accommodation (usually hostels) food and emergency medical assistance in various locations across Indonesia, including Lombok.” The answer also advised: “The funding provided by Australia meets the costs incurred by IOM for the above.”

As at 30 June 2005, since July 2000 payments to IOM to meet the costs of support to persons in Indonesia have totalled some AUD19.5 million.

UNHCR officials assess any protection claims. Australia made available funding of some USD 390,000 to the UNHCR in support of this work.