

## QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

### SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 20 OCTOBER 2009

#### IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

#### **(38) Program 4.3: Offshore asylum seeker management**

Senator Fierravanti-Wells and Senator Barnett (L&CA 91-92) asked:

In relation to immigration processing, how many Australian government officials are there on Christmas Island and provide a profile.

Can you compare that to the previous 12 months, since 30 June last year, when you break that down. We obviously want to know what providers you are funding. You also mentioned health workers and interpreters and so on; if you could break that down, we could compare that to 30 June last year.

*Answer:*

A small group of Department staff were on Christmas Island in June 2008, given there were few clients. This group managed business as usual functions on Christmas Island, as well as served as first line of response to any new boat arrivals until a response team could be flown to the island.

The size increased in October 2008 in response to the arrival of several boats, and continued to increase thereafter in proportion to the ongoing increases in the client caseload.

DIAC staff on Christmas Island perform a variety of roles, including direct client processing, detention operations, case management and investigative roles. Team profiles vary over time depending on the nature of the client caseload and their processing status. For example, during periods without irregular maritime arrivals on Christmas Island, entry interviewers are not required on island and are replaced by teams involved in subsequent stages of processing. Interpreter profiles are dependent on client languages.

Service provider resourcing is also impacted by client numbers, profile and the complexity of the caseload. For example, when unaccompanied minors are on island, foster carers are sourced specifically to support this group in community detention arrangements and the Australian Red Cross supports adults in the community detention population. The provision of health services is shared between Indian Ocean Territories Health Services (IOTHS) and International Health and Medical Services (IHMS). The Attorney-General's Department should be approached for numbers of IOTHS staff devoted to irregular maritime arrival processing at the intervals indicated below.

Other Australian Government officials contribute to the processing of irregular maritime arrivals, including Customs, AQIS, the AFP and ASIO. This Department does not have the data to report on staff numbers for other agencies.

The following table shows staffing numbers for this Department and key service providers.

<b>Agency/provider</b>	<b>16.10.2009</b>	<b>17.10.2008</b>	<b>30.06.2008</b>
Department of Immigration and Citizenship	58	28	4
Detention Service Provider	144	Approximately 40-50	Approximately 12-15
Australian Red Cross	4	2	0
Life Without Barriers	6	0	0
International Health and Medical Services (IHMS)	15.4	1	1
Interpreters	41	7	0