

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 20 OCTOBER 2009

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(78) Program 2.1: Refugee and Humanitarian Assistance

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

In relation to the 13 750 figure for 2008–09, have we allocated all those places? Please provide a breakdown of the allocation of each of those places in categories including the number of places allocated to UNHCR-registered asylum seekers referred to Australia by UNHCR for resettlement and other non UNHCR-registered asylum seekers.

Answer:

All places were allocated for the 2008–09 Humanitarian Program, which was set at 13 500 places. At 30 June 2009, 13 507 visas had been granted under the Program, made up of:

- 6499 Refugee visas (the majority of these visas were granted to refugees referred by UNHCR)
- 7008 Special Humanitarian visas
 - 4511 offshore Special Humanitarian Program visas
 - 2497 onshore visas

Offshore visa grants by geographic region were:

- Africa, 33.24 per cent;
- Asia and the Pacific, 33.09 per cent;
- Middle East and South West Asia, 33.46 per cent;
- Others (rest of world), 0.21 per cent.

The regional targets were 33 per cent to each of the three key regions and one per cent for others.

The Humanitarian Program is made up of Refugee places, Special Humanitarian Program places that are granted to people overseas, and Protection visa places for asylum seekers in Australia.

Overseas, the UNHCR is involved in the determination and referral of refugees who have applied for resettlement. People with humanitarian claims can also be proposed by family and community in Australia. If this latter group meet the relevant criteria they are granted Special Humanitarian Program visas.

In Australia, officers of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship undertake assessment of asylum seekers to determine if they are refugees.