

## QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

### SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 19 OCTOBER 2010

#### IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

#### **(245) Program 2.1: Refugee and Humanitarian Assistance**

Senator Cash asked:

Can you please explain why the acceptance rate of Afghans in Australia was so high while the acceptance rate of Afghan asylum seekers in the UK (according to UNHCR figures) was 8% and in Greece the acceptance rate was 0%?

*Answer:*

There are limits to the usefulness of comparing Australia's recognition rates with those of other countries due to the variations in policy, procedure and caseloads.

Although both the United Kingdom and Greece are signatories to the Refugees Convention they conduct these assessments under obligations in a different environment to Australia, including different domestic legislation, review mechanisms and jurisprudence.

There are also a number of differences in the approaches used by countries to assess the claims of asylum seekers. These include the level of direction given to decision makers on the assessment of cases, differences in interpretation of protection policy concepts, and the granting of other forms of stay to allow those found not to be refugees to remain in the country.

The composition of asylum seeker caseloads will also affect the refugee recognition rate. Australia's Afghan asylum seeker caseload is almost fully comprised of ethnic Hazara Shia from Ghazni province. In contrast the United Kingdom's caseload does not include any significant numbers of Hazara and their guidance to decision makers on Afghanistan does not deal with Hazara ethnicity as a basis for a refugee claim. It can be expected that the assessment of different groups, with different claims, would deliver different outcomes.