

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 19 OCTOBER 2010

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(343) Program 2.1: Refugee and Humanitarian Assistance

Senator Cash asked:

I refer to the Answer to QON 47 “How many places in the humanitarian and refugee program have been provided to the family members of onshore asylum claimants, including by those who have arrived by boat?” in which it was stated that “Data is not compiled in a way that can be interrogated to answer the question asked”. What action is taken by the Department to compile such data?

Answer:

As advised in Question on Notice 47, in the period 1 July 2009 – 31 May 2010, the Department granted 268 Humanitarian Program visas to immediate family of Protection visa holders who were irregular arrivals. Data was not kept in a way that could differentiate irregular air arrivals from irregular maritime arrivals.

On 1 November 2010, the Department introduced a code in the offshore processing system that identifies split family proposers under the Humanitarian Program who were Irregular Maritime Arrivals granted protection. For the purposes of split family, ‘immediate family member’ is used to refer to a spouse, dependent child or, where the family member in Australia is under 18 years of age, a parent. The code is mandatory at the time of grant.

Family members or persons who have been granted permanent Protection visas or Resolution of Status visas in Australia can also be proposed under the Family Migration Stream of the Migration Program. A System Change Request is currently identifying options for associating the client identifier of the proposer/sponsor with subsequent visa grants to family members. If accepted within departmental priorities, the change will provide tracing of sponsors/proposers under the Migration and Humanitarian programs.