

## **QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**

**SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 15 October 2012**

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

**(SE12/0324) PROGRAM – 2.1: Refugee and Humanitarian Assistance**

Senator Hanson-Young (written) asked:

What procedure does the Australian High Commission in Colombo follow should an asylum seeker present themselves at the High Commission expressing a fear of persecution or torture? For example, is it possible for Sri Lankans to seek asylum at the Australian High Commission in Colombo? If not, what avenues exist for Sri Lankans to seek asylum from the Australian Government if they “stay where they are” in Sri Lanka?

*Answer:*

An asylum seeker presenting at any Australian overseas mission can apply for a Refugee and Humanitarian visa (Class XB) or any of the range of migration and temporary visas available to people overseas. An asylum seeker who is not a national of the country where they were living would, in the first instance, be referred to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for refugee status determination. Asylum seekers who are still in their home country are outside UNHCR’s mandate. An asylum seeker who has another avenue of protection open to them would be encouraged to take advantage of it.