JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON AUSTRALIA'S IMMIGRATION DETENTION NETWORK

Q292 & 293

Question 292: Can the department advise whether the proportion of the people who are going on bridging visas that they assume will be able to find employment is factored into how it has put its numbers together?

Question 293: Could you also tell me what your assumption is about how many months it takes people whom you would expect to be able to be in a position to find employment? What are you expectations of that?

Answer: Bridging visas are granted to IMAs in a staged and orderly manner, using a prioritisation model which considers people on a case by case basis. This includes the length of time a client has been in detention and the need for clients to satisfy health and security requirements before being considered for the grant of a BVE.

This program is new and operational data is not yet available. While in no way being a prediction of the number of clients who would find employment (or within what timeframes), the financial modelling in the 2011-12 Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements takes a conservative approach and assumes that clients entering the program will require financial assistance for an average of 36 weeks. This approach has been adopted in view of the infancy of the program and the potential makeup of the initial cohort of clients.

On 25 November 2011, the department began granting Bridging Visa Es (BVEs) at first to people who had been in detention for longer than 15 months. It is expected that, at least initially, there will not be high take-up rates of work while people who have been in detention the longest adjust to living in the community. Over time, this is expected to change as the BVE program ramps up and grants visas to clients who have been in detention for shorter periods.