



Australian Government

Australian Transport Safety Bureau

Senator Bill Heffernan
Chair
Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Heffernan

Subject: Additional Estimates February 2015

On 24 February 2015 I appeared as a witness before the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee for the Additional Budget Estimates hearing.

Date: Tuesday 24 February 2015, page 156, line 3.

During the hearing, Senator Sterle asked the following question: *These four items—are they the size of a suitcase or a desk?*

In response I said:

*More than four, Senator Sterle. We have a system of classification. We are very careful in the way we treat the sonar data in terms of its acquisition, how we gather it and indeed how we assess and analyse it. We have a system of classification for objects, so we have three levels, if you like—one, two and three. Level 3 is items of potential interest—an object detected on sonar of some interest. Level 2 is likely to be something that is a bit more interesting, probably man-made. A level 1 object we need to investigate immediately. It could be an aircraft debris field. We have not had any level 1s. **We have, to date, according to my memory, had about eight level 2s.** And we have had well over 100 level 3s. I would hazard a guess that some have the dimensions of a shipping container, but we do not know until we get photo imagery. You are not taking a picture with sonar.*

I wish to clarify this answer. *We have, to date, had 12 level 2s – not eight as referenced above.*

It would be appreciated if you could please inform all Committee members of this clarification.

Yours sincerely

Peter Foley
General Manager
Australian Transport Safety Bureau

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62 Northbourne Ave
Canberra ACT 2601
Australia

PO Box 967
Civic Square
ACT 2608 Australia

Telephone 02 6257 4150
24 hours 1800 020 616
Fax 02 6247 3117

Web www.atsb.gov.au
Email atsbinfo@atsb.gov.au
Twitter @ATSBInfo