

**HOME AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO  
AUSTRALIAN BORDER FORCE**

**PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY SPOKEN QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Select Committee COVID-19

**QoN Number:** CV19-435

**Subject:** Use of immigration detention centres for quarantine

**Asked by:** Kristina Keneally

**Question:**

Senator KENEALLY: Before I wrap up this particular section in my questioning, I want to go back to two issues that were raised earlier, firstly, to Border Force, please, about immigration detention centres. I accept fully the proposition you have put about the capacity constraints at operating or currently open detention centres.

However, Port Hedland, Woomera and Baxter: Port Hedland was closed in 04, Woomera in 03, Baxter in 02. What is the status of those? Could they be used?

Ms Rendina: I don't have specifics around those particular sites, only to say that we have evaluated a number of locations and all have been deemed unsuitable for quarantine purposes

Senator KENEALLY: In the interests of time, can I put on notice then, I would like to know if Port Hedland, Woomera and Baxter have been considered. They might not be appropriate for the type of people you are talking about, Professor Kelly, but there are 36,000 people. I'd like to know if those three have been considered and why they haven't been used. I will cease at this point. I have another set of questions.

**Answer:**

Neither of the former immigration facilities at Baxter or Woomera were considered by the Australian Border Force or Department of Home Affairs as potential quarantine facilities. These facilities were returned to the Department of Defence a number of years ago;

- Baxter – 2007
- Wommera – 2003

The former facility at Port Hedland ceased operations as an immigration detention facility in 2004 and was included on a preliminary list of possible sites, but was deemed not quarantine suitable.

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**QoN Number:** CV19-436

**Subject: Australian citizens and permanent residents - left and not returned home**

***Asked by:*** Kristina Keneally

***Question:***

Senator KENEALLY: Thank you. This question is to the ABF. How many Australian citizens and permanent residents have left Australia with ABF permission since the borders have closed and have not returned home? Are you able to give us that data?

***Answer:***

It is not possible to provide disaggregated data without undertaking examination of individual travel records for all Australian Citizens and permanent residents that have departed Australia since the outward travel ban was implemented on 25 March 2020. Answering this question would involve an unreasonable diversion of resources.

As at 26 November 2020, 90,226 outward travel exemptions had been granted.