

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS  
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S PORTFOLIO

**Program:** Australian Human Rights Commission

**Question No. SBE16/033**

**Senator McKim asked the following question at the hearing on 18 October 2016:**

Senator McKIM: You together with the commission conducted a report, The Forgotten Children report. Could you refresh the committee's organisational memory about the methodology used to gather the evidence that informs that report?

Prof. Triggs: We held a formal inquiry as part of my powers as President. We held five public hearings to listen to evidence that was taken on oath. We called for submissions from the public and received something in the order of 240 submissions. We conducted monitoring visits to 13 detention centres, some of them several times, and I visited Christmas Island three times. We had interviews with—and I stand to be corrected and would like to take it on notice—something in the order of, I think, 1300 to 1500 parents and children over about a one-year period. Linked to the methodology also was the integrated role of medical practitioners, child psychiatrists and paediatricians. That was a key part of our methodology, to make sure that, whatever judgements we were making, ultimately, in relation to the mental health of children, their medical advice would be highly credible and support the commission's report.

**The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:**

For the National Inquiry into Children in Immigration Detention 2014, staff conducted interviews with a total of 1,129 individuals in detention including parents accompanied by younger children, families, children individually, and groups of unaccompanied children.