

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING : 23 February 2015

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(AE15/059) – Public Interest Immunity - Operation Sovereign Borders

Senator Carr, Kim (L&CA 98) asked:

Senator KIM CARR: What is the reason you cannot provide advice to this Senate committee as to the cost of an individual boat?

Mr Pezzullo: I would just rely on the contention previously advised to this committee, including back in early 2014 when the appropriation was made, that to give away an indication of the size of the fleet would give—

Senator KIM CARR: We are already past that.

Mr Pezzullo: critical information. Once you go to the per-unit price, as you have recognised with your exclamation back in response to the CEO's commentary before, you only need two numbers: the program value and the unit price. Once you have got those two factors, you know how many vessels General Campbell has at his disposal. As far as we are concerned, that remains classified information embraced by the immunity claim.

Senator KIM CARR: Yes. Have you responded to the Senate committee report on this matter, Minister? Has the government responded?

Senator Cash: I would need to take that on notice.

Answer:

The Government has maintained its position regarding public interest immunity in subsequent communications with the Senate.