

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING : 23 February 2015

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(AE15/085) - Detainee Self Harm - Programme 3.1 Compliance, Detention and Status Resolution (Administered)

Senator O'Sullivan, Barry (L&CA 124) asked:

Senator O'SULLIVAN: So, I want to particularly talk about the self-harm. Has the incidence of self-harm, to your knowledge, been tickety toc across all of the centres, all of the time over the last—let's take the last five years.

Mr Pezzullo: For that sort of time series, I would have to take that on notice to give you a scientific answer. I think, like Mr Douglas's evidence, it probably does wax and wane to some extent. I am not sure, Senator, how that compares with tickety toc. I am not quite sure if that is a reference to a—

Senator O'SULLIVAN: Ever-present. Has it been ever-present in each of the facilities that are isolated from each other over a long period of time; is it a recent trend; or did it spring up on Christmas Island for the six months in the last half of 2013 that was not present elsewhere?

Mr Pezzullo: I think, Senator, it is such a sensitive area. There are all sorts of reasons that go into people's decision to self-harm—motivations. I think I would prefer to take it on notice and, if there is anything that we can sensibly describe by way of that answering that trends—

Answer:

Data is available on the number of self-harm incidents in immigration detention facilities since 2011, and at Regional Processing Centres (RPCs), since 2012. This data does not take into account variations in population at the facilities or RPCs over this period. The data is at Attachment A.

The reasons for self-harming behaviours can be complex and can include:

- pre-existing mental health issues and/or experiences of torture or trauma; and
- factors such as dissatisfaction or uncertainty around immigration status.

Regardless of the cause, all detainees and transferees who self-harm, or threaten self-harm, receive support from an interdisciplinary team led by a mental health clinician.