

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING : 27 February 2017

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(AE17/001) - Smuggling ventures - Operation Sovereign Borders

Senator Fawcett, David (L&CA) written:

Senator FAWCETT: If we can distinguish between the turn-backs or returns and pure disruptions, are you able to give us an idea of how many smuggling ventures have been disrupted before people actually even got on the boats?

Mr Pezzullo: I would want to reflect on that. We do not always publicly announce—in fact, very rarely do we publicly speak of those matters, partly to ensure that our operational cooperation with relevant offshore partners is kept as confidential as it needs to be. We might have given some evidence—I remember both Major General Andrew Bottrell, and possibly the commissioner perhaps in general terms speaking of these matters—but I do not know that we have ever quantified numbers here. I might seek assistance from my colleague, the commissioner, and see if he has anything to add.

CHAIR: This is really an issue that I would rather come to in outcome 1 in any case.

Mr Pezzullo: Chair, we might reflect on how we might sensibly answer that in the public forum. Perhaps through the course of the day, Commissioner, you and I might reflect on how we might do that.

Answer:

From 18 September 2013 to 31 January 2017, there were 65 potential people smuggling ventures, with 2186 potential illegal immigrants on board disrupted before they were able to undertake their journey.