

## QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

**ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING : 27 February 2017**

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

**(AE17/300) - ABF Operations – Programme 1.1: Border Enforcement**

Senator Watt, Murray (L&CA 129) asked:

Senator WATT: I have a few questions about the Migrant Workers' Taskforce—they are probably for a combination of the Border Force and the department. This is something I am quite interested in.

...

Senator WATT: Do either of you have any idea how many investigations are currently underway into this kind of activity?

Mr Quaedvlieg : I can give you some indication of the volume of work that we have in the Border Force, but it may not give you a complete answer, because the Fair Work Ombudsman's office will also be conducting its own investigations in relation to pay and conditions et cetera. It is a bit difficult to contain my answers just to work emanating out of the task force itself, because at any given point in time our field compliance work is quite active. So, for example, for the first six months of this financial year—so between 1 July and 31 December—our field compliance officers have detained 7,900 unlawful noncitizens. We have detained 1,000 visa holders who are working in breach of their conditions. We have issued 234 warning notices in relation to illegal workers. We have issued five infringement notices. And we have done a lot of work around what you might have heard about earlier today—section 501 cancellations, of which there have been 554 this financial year.

Over and above that, we have conducted many operations under Taskforce Cadena in 13 different operations, and there are statistics; if you like, I could take it on notice and provide you with a breakdown of what each of those operations were, the number of charges that were laid et cetera—in the interests of brevity. But we are focusing quite heavily on what I mentioned is the syndicated nature of some of this exploitation, so going right along the visa continuum, starting upstream in source countries where there are corrupt elements in the visa-brokering and sponsoring system, flowing through to domestic labour hire intermediaries, educational institutions, migration agents and, in some cases, outright organised criminality or organised crime—and I would distinguish between those two. We are applying coercive powers through the ACIC, the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, to give us some better insights into some of the levels of sophistication of organised crime, and we are seeing quite a lot. Arising out of those coercive hearings that we have conducted through the ACIC work, we have a number of investigations currently on hand within our Investigations Division which looks at that organised criminality component of the visa system.

*Answer:*

Please see response AE17/083