

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES – 26 – 27 MAY 2014

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(BE14/077) PROGRAMME – 3.3 and 3.4: Illegal Maritime Arrival (IMA) Onshore Management

Senator Seselja (L&CA 36) asked:

Ms Pope: I think I am correct in saying that the arrangements in place at the time you are referring to were that we had some places funded by the Western Australian Department of Education and delivered at the local school. That provided 12 full-time places for asylum-seeker children to attend school. At that time, as people arrived they were being moved reasonably quickly to the mainland. So the children required relatively short periods of time in the school, and those places were reasonably adequate to respond to the needs of those children because they were moving relatively quickly. As Mr Cormack said, in recent times people have not moved off Christmas Island as rapidly and we have needed to change the model of education provision. What happened in between was that those places were shared out amongst the children that were there; so they were not attending full-time, they were attending as much as was possible, depending on the number of children, for that number of places. Those places are funded through the Department of Industry and Regional Development to the Western Australian government to provide educational services on Christmas Island. In addition to that, other education services were being provided at the centre where the children were present out of hours by teachers at the school; and also the service provider was providing education related activities, although not formal schooling, at the centre.

Senator SESELJA: Let's have a look at those 12 full-time places. You said at any given time people were passing through. What was the average age of the children there?

Ms Pope: I would have to take that on notice.

Answer:

The average age of the illegal maritime arrival children on Christmas Island who attended the 12 places at the local primary school between 1 July 2013 and 31 December 2013 was eight years old.