

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES – 26 – 27 MAY 2014

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(BE14/372) PROGRAMME – Operation Sovereign Borders

Senator Conroy (Written) asked:

Would the definition of “safe platform” used by the Minister also extend to these orange lifeboats, even after some of their safety equipment is removed?

a. Former Department of Defence Secretary Paul Barrett is quoted in the article saying that “everything they take off reduces the chances of survival in certain circumstances” – are you concerned that removing these items is reducing the chance of a safe arrival for the asylum seekers that are being placed onto these lifeboats by Australian personnel?

Answer:

The Australian Government does not comment on specifics of on-water matters.

However, it remains the case that safety of passengers, crew and Australian personnel is accorded the utmost priority in on-water operations. The disposition of staff and equipment reflects this commitment to safety.