

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES – 26 – 27 MAY 2014

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(BE14/396) PROGRAMME – 3.5 and 3.6: Illegal Maritime Arrival (IMA) Offshore Management

Senator Hanson-Young (Written) asked:

What child protection framework does the Department have in place for children detained in Australian immigration detention centres both onshore and offshore?

Answer:

Child protection issues in the onshore environment are currently managed through the Department of Immigration and Border Protection's various service delivery streams, including in community detention and immigration detention centres.

The department works with the relevant State and Territory child protection authorities, including to seek their advice on a case by case basis and to make reports in line with mandatory reporting obligations. Investigation of specific incidents is undertaken by the relevant authorities with cooperation from the department.

In relation to the offshore environment, child protection is ultimately a matter for the relevant government. However, the department notes that Save the Children Australia has been contracted to provide specialised services for children at the Nauru offshore processing centre (OPC), including child protection and welfare. Save the Children Australia employs Child Protection, Child Welfare and Child Safeguarding officers to ensure all welfare needs of minors are addressed. They also have an overarching Child Safeguarding Protocol and Code of Conduct, designed to ensure that a child safe environment is maintained at all times at the OPC. Other stakeholders are also engaged where necessary, including in relation to specific incidents. This includes the Governments of Australia and Nauru and relevant service providers, such as health specialists.

[Note: it is the Government's position that no minors will be transferred to Papua New Guinea]