

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING : 26 May 2015

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(BE15/056) - Wickham Point - Amenities - Programme 1.3: Compliance and Detention

Senator Hanson-Young, Sarah (L&CA 20) asked:

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: When Wickham Point was first opened. Have there been any improvements to the facility to make it more child friendly? Previous evidence suggested that it was not designed for detaining and locking up kids. CHAIR: That is your website.

Mr Pezzullo: Thank you, Chair. As I said, I do not have it in front of me.

Senator REYNOLDS: As a point of clarification, Secretary: it says it has an internet room, classrooms, gymnasium and a playground in the family compound, basketball hoops, soccer nets and garden beds as well.

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: Well, let's see you spend a week there, Senator Reynolds.

Mr Pezzullo: We will take all of the historical—

Senator REYNOLDS: So it is not quite as Senator Hanson-Young may have portrayed it, clearly.

Mr Pezzullo: If it helps the senator, we will take on notice the evolution of the amenity—the different construction phases and the addition of those features that Senator Reynolds and others have spoken about. It would be discourteous of me to ask the minister next to me to act as my research assistant, but she does have a computer there.

Answer:

In response to unprecedented numbers of Illegal Maritime Arrivals and extreme pressure on the capacity of the Immigration Detention Network, an instrument was executed on 11 July 2013 designating Wickham Point as an Alternative Place Of Detention.

Works were undertaken to convert two compounds, Surf and Sand, to family accommodation. Though converted, Sun continued to be used as accommodation for single adult males. During the conversion of the two compounds the electronic detection and deterrent system was also turned off.

The improvements made to the facility to make it more child friendly include:

- Development of a children's playground in the central recreation area;
- Internal segregation fences around the recreation and shared amenity areas;
- Additional shade structures in the central recreation area; and
- Works to address aspects of the facility that may have presented a risk to the safety of children such as uneven paths and water pooling in some areas of the grounds.

All works were completed by October 2013.

Prior to these enhancements, the facility already provided significant amenity including indoor and outdoor sport and recreation spaces, internet rooms, televisions in all accommodation rooms and spaces for the delivery of programs and activities.