

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING : 26 May 2015

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(BE15/068) - Funding for Detention Centres - Programme 1.3: Compliance and Detention

Senator Carr, Kim (L&CA 45) asked:

Senator KIM CARR: I see. Let's go then to Nauru: \$390 million—Senator KIM CARR: I must have got the figure wrong, because if the total amount is \$389 million, how much of that money will go to Nauru?

Mr Pezzullo: I think the officer helpfully gave some advice which is on the Hansard, but—

Senator KIM CARR: Can I ask the question again: how much of that money—I have obviously written it down incorrectly, because there could not be a greater amount going to one place than the total.

Mr Groves: It is because of the offsetting adjustment that I mentioned. There is an offset to our base funding that was already in the forward estimates. I do not have that negative adjustment split out by location.

Senator KIM CARR: Before the negative adjustment, what was the figure?

Mr Groves: It is \$390.2 million.

Senator KIM CARR: That is where I am having trouble. The total budget allocation for the three countries is \$389.6 million, but you are now telling me a greater sum is going to one of those three countries.

Mr Groves: Yes, because there are four components to it. There is a component for Nauru, there is a component for Manus and there is a component for Cambodia, and then wound up within that measure there is a negative \$131 million offset to our base funding.

Senator KIM CARR: So surely the figure therefore should be something like \$130 million off the \$390 million?

Mr Groves: I do not have a split-up of the \$130 million by location.

Mr Pezzullo: I think it is better if the officer takes it on notice because, firstly, there is what I might shorthandedly call 'the Nauru rule' that the Chair has been reminding me of on several occasions and, secondly, that number is not available to the officer because, as he said, there is a gross allocation that the government has provided to us. Perhaps a non-financial way of explaining the offset that would be helpful to the committee—because it took me a little while to understand it, but I finally did—is that the baseline assumptions that are in our funding base relate to an assumption about the arrival of boats and the arrival of further IMAs. As that number declines, what is known as demand-driven management kicks in so, in effect, we get less money. It is a saving to the government budget. It is recognition that with fewer boats and fewer arrivals there is less to be done.

Senator KIM CARR: I got that. I can understand that. But what I cannot understand—

Mr Pezzullo: But then trying to discount individual factors is something that I am not comfortable for the officer to do on the fly. So we will take it on notice and we will provide whatever we can.

Senator KIM CARR: I want you to explain this to me: if the budget measure says there is \$390 million and then there is a discount of \$130 million off that, why does the budget paper not actually say what the proper figure is?

Answer:

As part of the 2015-16 Commonwealth Budget the Government announced the measure Refugee resettlement arrangements for Illegal Maritime Arrivals in offshore processing centres which provided a total of \$389.6m over 2014-15 and 2015-16 and included \$141.9m of capital funding.

Funding for refugee resettlement arrangements beyond 2015-16 will be considered as part of the normal Commonwealth Budget cycle.