

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING : 26 May 2015

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(BE15/077) - Mental Health Issues - Programme 1.3: Compliance and Detention

Senator O'Sullivan, Barry (L&CA 56) asked:

Senator O'SULLIVAN: Mr Pezzullo, could you do something for me. Would you convey my apologies to any of your executive or staff who may leave here today believing that there are those of us—there is one—who think that your organisation, your executive and all your personnel, do anything but a fine job for our nation in very difficult circumstances. Please pass that on. Now let's bite into a couple of these elephants. I am going to ask some questions that will put your people to work on notice. I apologise in advance for the volume of it.

Let us find these poor children who are suffering from psychiatric trauma, and could you provide some data as to how many of them are traumatised because of the circumstances in their former life that have to do with the reasons they left where they left from with their families, the circumstances in which they arrived here, including and in particular if children had witnessed parents, relatives or other people in transit with them die on the high seas, and indeed the trauma that would come from watching their parents in stressful circumstances. Could we get some numbers around that so we can put to bed this insinuation that somehow the way that we are caring for these fine souls and their circumstances in life is as a result of the behaviour of Australians since their arrival here? Is that clear enough, or should I write to you with the main points?

Mr Pezzullo: No, your request is very clear.

Senator O'SULLIVAN: Thank you.

Mr Pezzullo: And, yes, we will take it on notice, which I think I should indicate for the Hansard that we will.

Answer:

Since the commencement of Operation Sovereign Borders on 13 September 2013, Twenty-five children offshore have disclosed a history of torture and/or trauma*.

This data does not capture those children who have experienced torture and/or trauma and chosen not to disclose this, or where adult family members have experienced torture and/or trauma.