

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING : 26 May 2015

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(BE15/205) - Denied requests for Media Access to IDFs - Internal Product (DIBP)

Senator Hanson-Young, Sarah (L&CA 23) asked:

“Ms Noble: There was a question yesterday about media protocols for immigration detention facilities. Just to position my answer: we do not consider requests made for regional processing centres; that is a matter for the foreign government. So my answers are in relation to immigration detention facilities here in Australia. We have a current media access policy which has been in place since late 2012. That policy and the deed of agreement for media access are actually available on our website, but we can also table those documents here today. We do not formally record the numbers of media requests to access facilities, but in the current financial year to date we are aware of about a dozen requests from media, none of which has been approved or authorised.

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: So, out of a dozen, none of them has been approved?

Ms Noble: That is correct.

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: What is the reasoning for that?

Ms Noble: I can get you some more detail, noting that I said we do not actually keep records of the requests themselves. But it is broadly related to the security issues in the centre.”

Answer:

- The total number of media requests to access detention facilities is not formally recorded in Departmental systems as many requests are made informally, for example, via a telephone request or direct to service providers.
- Requests from media outlets to visit immigration detention facilities are considered with the impact on the security and operations of the facility in mind, as well as the safety of media representatives and.
- The majority of the requests from media outlets to visit immigration detention facilities (IDFs) in the 2014-15 financial year relate to requests to interview detainees. The Department does not facilitate requests to interview detainees in IDFs for operational and privacy reasons, however detainees are free to contact the media if they so choose.