



**Australian
BORDER FORCE**

Mr Timothy Watling
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mr Watling

The Department provided a written reply in a response to two Questions on Notice (QoNs) reference BE17/307 and BE17/042, following an appearance at the Senate Budget Estimates Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee hearing on Monday 22 May 2017. We became aware of the errors in our responses that require correction.

QoN BE17/307 – “Number of Vessel Turn backs – Operation Sovereign Borders”

The question asked by Senator Carr was:

“ Please provide the number of vessels turned back by the ABF, the dates on which they were turned back, the number of adults and the number of children on board, and the country where the vessel departed from for:

2012/2013

2013/2014

2014/2015

2015/2016

2016/2017”

The response to this question (at Attachment A) included, “...Of these 765 individuals, there have been 27 identified as children.”

On further review and analysis of the data, an error was found to have been made in the calculation of the figure. The following is the corrected evidence in response to the Senator’s question:

“...Of these 765 individuals, there have been 117 identified as children.”

QoN BE17/042 – “Date of Turn-backs”

The question asked by Senator Pratt was:

“And can you take on notice providing a list of all dates of turn-backs since the adoption of the turn-back policy and the details of the country of origin of those boats and the asylum seekers on them, if you have a record of that.”

The response to this question (at Attachment B) was provided in a table, where venture number 22 in November 2015 is characterised as a 'Turnback'. On review of the venture, it is more correctly characterised as an 'Assisted return'.

Similar QoNs were asked in the most recent Senate Supplementary Budget Estimates Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee hearing on 23 October 2017. The response provided to SE17/204 (at Attachment C) is consistent with the corrected evidence in this letter.

The corrections above represent the most accurate information available to date. We regret this error and appreciate the opportunity to provide this clarification to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee.

Yours sincerely

Air Vice-Marshal Stephen Osborne
Commander
Joint Agency Task Force Operation Sovereign Borders

30 November 2017

Attachments:

Attachment A	BE17/307 – "Number of Vessel Turn backs – Operation Sovereign Borders"
Attachment B	BE17/042 – "Date of Turn-backs"
Attachment C	SE17/204 – "Boat turn backs"