

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING : 22 May 2017

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(BE17/017) - Data breaches - Internal Product (DIBP)

Senator Pratt, Louise (L&CA 65) asked:

Senator PRATT: Can I ask what data breaches in data or personal information have been identified by the department in the last five years.

Mr Pezzullo: I might ask the head of our assurance division to join me—although elements of this would benefit from having Ms Fernandez here—but there have been a number of data breaches that have been notified to the Privacy Commissioner, the most significant of which occurred going back some three years now. So I think that is captured in the time period. I do not know that we have had significant ones since then, but Ms Moy might assist me. There was certainly a significant one that we have had conversations about in this committee that dates back at least in one case three years. So that is within your time period.

Senator PRATT: There was a significant breach in 2014.

Mr Pezzullo: Early 2014, as I recall it. Ms Moy maintains the relationship with the Privacy Commissioner and she runs our relationships with all of the external scrutiny bodies. These matters are reportable to the Privacy Commissioner, so they might be matters better known to Ms Moy—or known in more detail, I should say—for the last five years.

Ms Moy: I do not have the full list for the last five years but I can get something for you probably before the dinner break.

Senator PRATT: Okay. I can see the breach. I have got the notification on the data breach in 2014, where there was information accessible on a website before it was removed. Are there any additional data breaches in that time period?

Mr Pezzullo: We will take on notice the notifiable breaches that we have informed the commission about over the last five years. One material change that we made in light of that, one of the first decisions I took as secretary in the latter part of 2014, was to put all of our systems behind the protected firewall. Previously many of our staff were on internet-facing systems, so we were not too protected. That has certainly helped to mitigate the risk of inadvertent, clumsy, accidental disclosure.

Answer:

During the last five years, the Department has reported the following number of data breaches to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner.

Year	Number of data breaches reported
2012-2013	2
2013-2014	1
2014-2015	5
2015-2016	7
2016-23 May 2017	3