

## QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

### BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING : 22 May 2017

#### IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

#### **(BE17/019) - Advice to the Minister relating to RSD in Manus - Programme 1.5: IMA Offshore Management**

Senator McKim, Nick (L&CA 66) asked:

Senator McKIM: I will come to that in more detail soon. I am just asking: have you provided advice to Mr Dutton that those people who are yet to make applications—from that cohort—are fake refugees?

Mr Pezzullo: We have certainly provided advice as to—I hate to use the term 'strike rate'—the rate at which persons otherwise are found to be refugees. We maintain statistics on all of our visa classes, including permanent and temporary refugee determinations. Yes, we would provide him with that quantitative advice on a regular basis.

Senator McKIM: So you have not provided him with advice that they are fake refugees?

Mr Pezzullo: That is a particular phrase that has been used—

Senator McKIM: Your minister used it, Mr Pezzullo, not me.

Mr Pezzullo: I am sure, through the minister at the table, Minister Dutton may wish to take that on notice and he might wish to provide advice to this committee as to the particular persons to which he is referring. All I can say is that, from the department's point of view, we provide him with regular updates in a quantitative sense of refugee status determination onshore, the rate at which we find protection to be applicable, the rate at which we do not find it to be applicable, the rate at which—as we heard earlier—it is turned down or remitted in administrative merits review and so on and so forth.

Senator McKIM: I have asked it three or four times and not got an answer, but—

Mr Pezzullo: I think I said that I was referring it to the minister.

Senator McKIM: No, I am asking you, Mr Pezzullo: has your department provided the minister with advice that the people in the onshore cohort who are yet to make application for refugee status fake refugees?

Mr Pezzullo: We provided him, quantitative and otherwise, with advice—

Senator McKIM: That is not the question.

Mr Pezzullo: that might lead him to draw a conclusion. He decides what phrases he uses in the public discourse. That is a matter that I will refer to him.

Senator McKIM: But I did not ask that; I just asked whether you advised him whether or not they were fake refugees.

CHAIR: 'Fake news' is the term of the month, it seems, and it applies very often to what we hear coming out of this centre, I might say.

Senator McKIM: I am obviously not going to get an answer, so I will go back to the 915 people that I think we have agreed are on Manus Island at the moment.

*Answer:*

The Department has no further information to add to the evidence provided to the Committee by Mr Pezzullo on 23 May 2017.

