

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES – 20 OCTOBER 2014

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(SE14/026) PROGRAMME – Internal Product

Senator Carr (L&CA 58) asked:

Senator KIM CARR: Thank you. I come to the issue of complaints. On page 259 of your annual report there is a reference to the increase in complaints to the Commonwealth Ombudsman of 56 per cent. I take it that it would not be in the annual report unless it was an accurate statement. It is not an allegation? It is not a rumour?

Mr Pezzullo: I am sure that it was put in there on the basis that it had been checked, Senator.

Senator KIM CARR: It was on a factual basis, right? What is the basis of the increase by 56 per cent of complaints this year?

Mr Pezzullo: Unless one of the deputies can assist, I have not got quite to that table in the annual report yet, as I am reading my way into the portfolio and the departmental business.

Senator KIM CARR: Could you take that on notice, please. What is the basis for the increase of 56 per cent? And it is no good saying to me the statistics—I can read the statistics. That clearly—

Answer:

The Department of Immigration and Border Protection's 2013-14 Annual Report states:

“The number of complaints referred to the department by the Commonwealth and Immigration Ombudsman in 2013–14 increased by 56 per cent on the previous year. In 2013–14 the department received 376 complaints and finalised 325, compared with 241 complaints received and 238 complaints finalised in 2012–13.

This increase was attributable to a large number of health-related complaints received following a visit by the ombudsman's office to Christmas Island Immigration Detention Centre in March 2014 as part of its detention visits and oversight programme. The most common issues raised in complaints continue to concern visa refusals, visa cancellations or delays in visa processing.”