

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES – 20 OCTOBER 2014

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(SE14/479) PROGRAMME –

Senator Reynolds (L&CA 7-8) asked:

Senator REYNOLDS: What I would like to pick up is what they raised with the Attorney-General's Department in that there was some extended discussions about exactly at what point the commission had decided to do this inquiry into children in detention. I am wondering if you could clarify for us what engagement the department has had at what point with the commission on this inquiry.

Mr Pezzullo: In my personal case my corporate knowledge is limited to the end of the process. The president wrote to my predecessor with a next-to-final draft and sought comments.

Senator REYNOLDS: When was that?

Mr Pezzullo: We will get to the dates, as I suspect we are going to get into a chronology here. It was sometime around September. Certainly Mr Bowles's response, I am recalling to mind, was in September. By the time the president and her officers had considered the material from the department, including addressing issues of what we felt were factual inaccuracies, or at least ambiguities around some of the facts, I was in the chair as secretary and so I responded to the president in October. That is kind of the back end of the process. I think your question starts at the front end, so I might defer initially to Mr Cormack who has been in the chair all the way through, and then perhaps Ms Pope has some further illumination that she can provide.

Senator REYNOLDS: Perhaps for the sake of time for the committee I would be happy for you to take that on notice and if you could provide a detailed chronology of it, because I suspect it might take some time to go through.

Answer:

In **November 2013**, the Department first received informal advice from AHRC representatives regarding the intention to conduct an inquiry into children in immigration detention.

On **22 January 2014**, the President of the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), Professor Gillian Triggs, wrote to the Secretary of the Department, formally advising of her intent to conduct an inquiry into children in immigration detention, and providing the terms of reference for the inquiry.

The Inquiry was conducted between **February and September 2014**, during which time the AHRC visited places of immigration detention in which children were held, conducted a series of public hearings and called for public submissions.