

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING : 19 October 2015

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(SE15/082) - ABF armed officers - Programme 1.2: Border Management

Senator Hanson-Young, Sarah (L&CA) written:

Where are the people who are currently armed stationed predominantly?

Why did the department decide that it was essential for these officers to be armed?

Who made that decision and signed off on it?

In what circumstances was it foreseen that an officer would need to use a gun?

Are there specific examples from the past of times when Customs or Immigration Department staff would have benefited from being armed?

Answer:

1. Australian Border Force (ABF) officers, who are trained and authorised to carry a firearm, are deployed at various locations across Australia, including airports, seaports and at sea.
2. Prior to the stand-up of the ABF, some Australian Customs and Border Protection service officers were armed. Having armed ABF officers is a continuation of this.
3. The carrying of firearms and other approved items of personal defensive equipment (PDE) is authorised under section 189A of the *Customs Act 1901*. It is not a new capability within the ABF.
4. PDE can be used by ABF officers only for self-defence from physical attack. It is not an offensive capability.
5. Please refer to question 2.