

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING : 17 October 2016

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(SE16/016) - Over stayers - Programme 2.3: Visas

Senator Griff, Stirling (L&CA 68) asked:

Mr Manthorpe: Not a great deal, but I would make a couple of quick points. One is that all this has to be seen not only in the context that at any given moment there are about two million non-Australian persons in the country but also in the context that, in the year just gone, we granted something in the order of seven million visas. So, to have a shift in a number or stock of overstayers of a few thousand in the context of that massive volume—and the volume is rising materially year on year—helps to put the whole story in perspective.

The other observation is that, whilst colleagues in the Border Force have taken compliance action against a group, staff in my own line who look after status resolution, before you get to the compliance point, are also actively engaging with a number of the group with a view to encouraging, as the secretary has pointed out, voluntary compliance. With the use of digital tools such as VEVO—visa entitlement verification online—and other tools, we can encourage voluntary compliance.

Senator GRIFF: Are those that have been located in paid employment or undertaking some job function, in the main?

Mr Manthorpe: It is a very diverse set of circumstances. There are some people who are working unlawfully; there are some people who are not. It is a wide variety of circumstances.

Senator GRIFF: Do you have stats on this at the time?

Mr Pezzullo: We could probably take that on notice.

Mr Manthorpe: I would have to take that on notice. I am not sure.

Answer:

In the 2015–16 programme year, 3940 people were located through ABF compliance field activity or police referrals. Of these, 1583 people (40 per cent of the total) were recorded as working illegally. This means that the individuals were located working in breach of their visa conditions or after overstaying their visa validity period.