

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 24 FEBRUARY 2009

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(16) Output 1.3: Border Security

Senator Fierravanti-Wells (L&CA 49-50) asked:

I accept your comments that it has always been a priority; it certainly was when we were in government. The point that I am making, Mr Metcalfe is that there is one difference—that is, you have now abolished temporary protection visas. Since that announcement there has been a marked increase in activity. Call it arrivals, call it reports, call it interceptions or call it whatever you will, but the activity that has occurred since last year has been marked. There has been an increase in activity. My question to you is: are you saying that the abolishing of temporary protection visas had nothing whatsoever to do with the increase in activity?

In fairness, Mr Metcalfe, I will give my document to you and you might clarify it for me. In particular, could you give me a breakdown and some additional information? I will put that question on notice and you can provide that to me.

Answer

There is no evidence to suggest that the abolition of Temporary Protection Visas has resulted in increased unauthorised boat arrivals.

Rather, an examination of the TPV data indicates unauthorised boat arrivals increased following the introduction of TPVs.

- In the 12 months prior to the introduction of TPVs there were 3042 unauthorised boat arrivals in Australia.
- After the TPV regime began, there was a small drop in the rate of unauthorised boat arrivals, with 2921 in the following 12 months.
- The rate began to rise rapidly again, however, and from December 2000 until November 2001, 6540 people arrived on unauthorised boats.

In relation to the table regarding boat numbers and arrivals by program year in the document provided to Mr Metcalfe, some amendments are as follows:

Boat Arrivals

2001-2002	19 boats	3,039 people arrived
2003-2004	3 boats	82 people arrived
2005-2006	8 boats	61 people arrived
2006-2007	4 boats	133 people arrived
2008-2009	to February 2009 8 boats	178 people arrived