

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 25 February 2014

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(AE14-159)

Senator Carr (Written) asked:

Regarding Australia gifting two vessels to Sri Lanka, we received a response from ACBPS that formal gifting arrangements will be finalised in documentation under the Australian-Sri Lankan Joint Working Group on People Smuggling and Other Transnational Crime.

- a) Does this then mean that the arrangements have not yet been finalised?
- b) If not, when will this occur?
- c) If the document has now been finalised can we please have a copy?
- d) Has Sri Lanka already received the vessels?
- e) If yes – when did they receive them?
- f) If no – where are the vessels currently?

Media reports from 6 February 2014 state that Australia will be gifting two Bay Class vessels to Malaysia in mid-2015.

- g) Is there a formal document detailing the gift?
- h) Can we have a copy of the memorandum of understanding with Malaysia?
- i) Why are the vessels not being gifted until mid-2015?
- j) Where are the vessels currently?

Answer:

- a) The gifting of two *Bay Class* vessels to Sri Lanka will be undertaken firstly through an exchange of letters between Australia and Sri Lanka, which has been completed. The process will conclude with the signing of a deed of transfer. The final deed will be formally signed at the Australian-Sri Lankan Joint Working Group on People Smuggling and Other Transnational Crime, scheduled to be held in Canberra 22-23 April 2014.
- b) During the Australian-Sri Lankan Joint Working Group on People Smuggling and Other Transnational Crime scheduled to be held in Canberra 22-23 April 2014
- c) The final deed is yet to be finalised with Sri Lanka Navy. As such it would not be appropriate to provide a copy.
- d) ACV *Corio Bay* was transferred to Sri Lankan ownership on 4 April 2014 after which it will transit from Cairns to Colombo. ACV *Hervey Bay* will be transferred and transit to Sri Lanka in June.
- e) ACV *Corio Bay* was transferred to Sri Lankan ownership on 4 April 2014.

- f) ACV *Hervey Bay* is currently in operational service; as such, it would not be appropriate to provide details of its location.
- g) The gifting of two *Bay* Class vessels to Malaysia will also be undertaken through an exchange of letters, concluding with the signing of a deed of transfer. These are currently being drafted.
- h) The deed is yet to be finalised with Malaysia. As such it would not be appropriate to provide details.
- i) The transfer of *Bay* Class vessels is dependent on the progress of the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service transition program from *Bay* Class to *Cape* Class. The *Cape* Class timetable allows for gifting of two vessels in 2014 and two further vessels in 2015.
- j) The vessels which will be transferred to Malaysia are still in operational service and, as such, it is not appropriate to provide details of their location.