

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION SERVICE

Question No. 17

Senator Humphries asked the following question at the hearing on 16 October 2012:

Senator HUMPHRIES: How many [SIEVs] did you say [had arrived] at Ashmore [Island]?

Mr Pezzullo: I did not say. I said a number would have gone into Ashmore. I have got it aggregated, so I will have to break it down further if you want to chase the details. The total number in the Ashmore region, which includes the Ashmore islands but also places slightly closer to Western Australia—I presume that would include places like Browse Island, et cetera—is 39. How many of those are in the Ashmore Island area, as opposed to areas closer to WA, I would have to take on notice. But the general number in that vicinity is 39.

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

In 2012 (to 31 October 2012) there have been 24 suspected irregular entry vessels (SIEVs) intercepted inside the Ashmore Islands Contiguous Zone, and nine SIEVs rendered assistance outside the Ashmore Islands Contiguous Zone consistent with Safety of Life at Sea obligations.

It is important to note that, arrivals to other locations near the Ashmore Islands, such as Browse Island, Scott Reef and Cartier Island, are often taken to Ashmore Islands where arrangements are made for transfer to Australian Government authorities on Christmas Island. To 31 October 2012, there have been three arrivals to Browse Island, two to Scott Reef and two to Cartier Island.