

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 19 November 2013

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(SE13/0420) PROGRAMME – 4.2: Onshore Detention Network

Senator Zdenko Seselja (L&CA 92) asked:

Senator SESELJA: Given the complexity in casting forward then, is it possible for you to perhaps take on notice to give us a comparison—I am sure it is in the budget papers, but just for simplicity—between when we last had a situation where there were nearly none or no boat arrivals, which I think was described earlier as being in the 2007-08 financial year, and the last financial year in terms of costs. That might answer my question in broad terms on the kinds of potential savings there are when you actually stop people from coming to this country unlawfully.

Mr Bowles: I can take that on notice and see what we can do in that space. I am not sure how we can actually do that. Again, if I make the assumption of zero arrivals and zero people in detention you would obviously have an almost zero cost. But there is a cost to maintaining the network. There is a cost to a range of things. All of that is factored in there. So I will see what we can work out.

Senator SESELJA: And those costs would be known historically?

Mr Bowles: Yes, that is right. They change. The detention network is far different to what it was even two years ago, but it is totally different to what it was in 2007-08 as well. All of that is built into the model. We can take on notice to have a look at what we can provide. I am just conscious that it is quite difficult to get a simple comparison, that is all.

Answer:

The table below shows a comparison of arrivals and funding between 2007-08 to 2012-13:

Programme 4.3: Offshore asylum seeker management

Actual costs	2007-08 *	2012-13	Variance
	\$'million	\$'million	\$'million
Total expenses	85.5	2,218.8	2,133.3
Arrivals (source: annual reports)	29	25,091	25,062

* Funding for offshore asylum seeker management was allocated to Program 1.6 in 2007-08.