

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 22 May 2006

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(207) Output 1.3: Enforcement of Immigration Law

Senator Milne asked:

Who organised the vessel known as SIEV6? Had any of the earlier vessels associated with the organiser of SIEV6 required rescue? Was the organiser of SIEV6 involved in organising either the Palapa or Olong voyages? If not, then on what basis could the claim be made that 'some risk of... rescue at sea' mentioned in the People Smuggling Taskforce minutes of 18 October 2001 concerned a people smuggler other than Abu Quassey?

Answer:

DIMA is unable to provide a response to this question as it would disclose classified and sensitive intelligence.

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(208) Output 1.3: Enforcement of Immigration Law

Senator Milne asked:

DIMIA assigns codenames to suspected illegal entry vessels. Does it also keep records of the people smugglers who organised the voyages of each SIEV?

Answer:

Intelligence and other information are kept on suspected illegal entry vessels but the identity of the organisers is not always known.

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(209) Output 1.3: Enforcement of Immigration Law

Senator Milne asked:

On what date did DIMIA first become aware of the people smuggler known as Abu Quassey?

Answer:

DIMA first gained knowledge of Abu Quassey's people smuggling activities in early 2000.

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(210) Output 1.3: Enforcement of Immigration Law

Senator Milne asked:

To your knowledge how many suspected illegal entry vessels have sunk en route to Australia? Please give details of dates, vessels and passenger numbers if known.

Answer:

Detailed information in relation to suspected illegal entry vessels that have sunk en route to Australia is best obtained through the Department of Defence, which manages surveillance activity in northern Australian waters. However, the *Senate Select Committee for an inquiry into a certain maritime incident*, concluded on 23 October 2002, notes that SIEVs 4, 6 and 10 sank at some point during the interception or tow-back process.

In addition, DIMA is aware that on 20 July 1997, 5 Sri Lankan males arrived on-shore from a boat (Augustus) that sank near Christmas Island. The group were picked up by a passing recreational yacht which dropped them off on Christmas Island. We are aware that up to 15 people involved may have lost their lives following the sinking of the boat although only one body was recovered.