



OFFICIAL

OCOM 2020/719

Senator Katy Gallagher
C/O Committee Secretary
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Gallagher

I appeared at the Senate Select Committee hearing on COVID-19 on 18 August 2020.

In my capacity as Commissioner of the Australian Border Force, I gave evidence to the Committee. Upon review of the Hansard record, I have become aware of the need to correct my response to three questions.

The first correction is on page 19 in response to Senator Keneally's question:

"So why was he asking?"

My response to this question was in part:

"Senator, I'm not going to criticise my officers for trying to be helpful. It's like the night before, where our officer in the RPC, the control centre in Sydney, got the phone call."

This response is not an accurate reflection of the matter and I am providing the following correction of evidence in response to this question:

The officer in the Regional Coordination Unit.

The second related to a question from yourself at page 34:

"It was announced in April that it would be used—"

My response to this question was:

"It was announced in April, but we've only, literally in the last—"

This response is not an accurate reflection of the matter and I am providing the following correction of evidence in response to this question:

The reactivation of the North West Point Immigration Detention Centre on Christmas Island was announced in August 2020.

Thirdly, further to my responses provided to questions from Senator Keneally and Senator McKim on page 8 of the Hansard that an ABF officer gave customs and

immigration clearance after pratique had been granted, this was a reference to practical pratique, which meant that passengers would not be prevented from disembarking. To avoid any doubt, the ABF officer was aware before boarding the vessel that NSW Health had assessed the vessel as low risk and was not attending.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide this clarification, which will ensure that correct information has been provided to the Senate Select Committee on COVID-19.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Outram APM
Commissioner

 August 2020