

**Question on notice no. 311**

**Portfolio question number: AE21-311**

**2020-21 Additional estimates**

**Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, Home Affairs Portfolio**

**Senator Nick McKim:** asked the Australian Border Force on 22 March 2021—

In March 2020 I asked "Regarding the screening of people intercepted on vessels in the context of Operation Sovereign Borders, could the Department please confirm: a. whether the 'enhanced screening' process at sea is the same as the 'enhanced screening' process that is sometimes referred to for people on land in Australia". The Department responded in May 2020 [AE20-206] that it "no longer conducts enhanced screening either at sea or on land". As such, could you please explain how the Department ensures it is not returning people with legitimate claims for protection back to danger now that you are no longer conducting enhanced screening?

**Answer —**

Please see the attached answer.

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS  
ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES  
22 MARCH 2021**

**Home Affairs Portfolio  
Australian Border Force**

**Program 1.1: Border Enforcement**

**AE21-311 - Operation Sovereign Borders**

Senator Nick McKim asked:

In March 2020 I asked “Regarding the screening of people intercepted on vessels in the context of Operation Sovereign Borders, could the Department please confirm: a. whether the ‘enhanced screening’ process at sea is the same as the ‘enhanced screening’ process that is sometimes referred to for people on land in Australia;”. The Department responded in May 2020 [AE20-206] that it “no longer conducts enhanced screening either at sea or on land”. As such, could you please explain how the Department ensures it is not returning people with legitimate claims for protection back to danger now that you are no longer conducting enhanced screening?

*Answer:*

The term ‘enhanced screening’ has been superseded by the term ‘entry screening’.

Entry screening refers to the process undertaken to determine if an asylum seeker who, upon entering the migration zone but before being immigration cleared, seeks to claim protection in Australia

The Department conducts entry screening to ensure it does not refoule asylum seekers with legitimate protection claims, in breach of Australia’s international obligations.

The screening process identifies if the asylum seeker has claims which may potentially engage Australia’s protection obligations.

The Department can confirm that the entry screening process at sea is the same as the entry screening process that is sometimes referred to for people on land in Australia.