

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING : 08 February 2016

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(AE16/006) - Resettlement countries - Programme 1.6: Regional Cooperation

Senator Carr, Kim (L&CA 24) asked:

Senator KIM CARR: In regard to the regional partners and possible resettlement of people that are currently on Nauru and are there as a result of Australian government actions, what actual countries have been approached?

Mr Pezzullo: Beyond the occasional and episodic references made to such matters by both my minister and other ministers, including the foreign minister, I do not know that I am in a position, without referring back to ministers, to volunteer to you a conclusive list or an exclusive list, as it were, of the countries that have been approached. By definition, if there are discussions on foot which are at a particularly delicate state or stage and we have given assurances about confidentiality, I would not name those countries anyway.

CHAIR: So you will take it on notice?

Mr Pezzullo: I think this is one case where I need to refer to a minister and also to take it on notice.

Senator KIM CARR: Thank you.

Answer:

It would not be appropriate to disclose a list of countries approached, or details of confidential discussions with other governments. Minister Dutton commented publicly on this matter during a press conference on 9 October 2015:

“We have been having discussions [on resettlement] and I have commented on this a number of times publicly. I have had discussions with a number of bilateral partners over a period of time...

I am not going to publicly comment in relation to where some of the negotiations are at. I think we're best to discuss those issues in private with those partners and if there is an announcement to make we can announce it.”