

## QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

**BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING : 22 May 2017**

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

**(BE17/041) - Boats turned back more than once - Programme 1.1: Border Enforcement**

Senator Pratt, Louise (L&CA 102) asked:

Senator Pratt: Are there any boats that have been turned back more than once, or a number of times?

Air Vice Marshal Osborne: To my knowledge, the answer is no.

Senator Pratt: The vessel itself?

Air Vice Marshal Osborne: The vessel itself.

Senator Pratt: 'To your knowledge', you have said. Could you take on notice whether there is any record of that.

Mr Pezzullo: We will check that. I have been in this or the head of Customs and Border Protection role for 3½ years. I do not recall an instance. The Air Vice Marshal is the third commander, so he might—

Senator Pratt: I am assuming that is something you would actively would track, though—that you would be able to tell by the character of the boat.

Mr Pezzullo: We would know. This is taking us back to some of the meetings that the chairman referred to earlier, but you will recall that early in the piece we made it clear that we would take a very conservative stance about whether the vessel would be allowed to be used for the return turn-back voyage. You might remember the use, for instance, of lifeboats as an alternative. You might remember other evidence that has been given about the use of alternative fishing-style vessels, where that provides a safer mode of return. Again, I cannot recall an instance where we have seen the same returned vessel turn up again, but the Air Vice Marshal will check the records.

*Answer:*

There are no records of any vessels being utilised in a people smuggling ventures more than once since the commencement of Operation Sovereign Borders.