

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 22 May 2006

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(182) Output 1.3: Enforcement of Immigration Law

Senator Ludwig (L&C 128) asked:

Where did the idea originally come from—to have six boats or a fleet?

Answer:

In 1997 a range of measures were commenced by Commonwealth agencies as part of a ‘whole of government’ strategy to enable effective protection of Australia’s borders. In 1998 a joint agency review of Immigration Border Issues in the Torres Strait concluded that Australia’s border integrity needed to be enhanced and a New Policy Proposal was put to the then minister prepared by the Department which included provision of a maritime capability.

Six *Bermuda 560* centre console boats and one *Sabre* were purchased in 1999 for the purpose of Immigration Response Vessels to be used by the Department’s Movement Monitoring Officer Network to improve their capability to monitor and record the movement of people into or through the Torres Strait Protected Zone and to assist in the reduction in the number of breaches of the Torres Strait Treaty.