

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 22 May 2006

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(210) Output 1.3: Enforcement of Immigration Law

Senator Milne asked:

To your knowledge how many suspected illegal entry vessels have sunk en route to Australia? Please give details of dates, vessels and passenger numbers if known.

Answer:

Detailed information in relation to suspected illegal entry vessels that have sunk en route to Australia is best obtained through the Department of Defence, which manages surveillance activity in northern Australian waters. However, the *Senate Select Committee for an inquiry into a certain maritime incident*, concluded on 23 October 2002, notes that SIEVs 4, 6 and 10 sank at some point during the interception or tow-back process.

In addition, DIMA is aware that on 20 July 1997, 5 Sri Lankan males arrived on-shore from a boat (Augustus) that sank near Christmas Island. The group were picked up by a passing recreational yacht which dropped them off on Christmas Island. We are aware that up to 15 people involved may have lost their lives following the sinking of the boat although only one body was recovered.