



KEY BRIEF

Supplementary Estimates Hearing – November 2024

Topic: Operation Sovereign Borders (OSB)
Group: National Operations
Division: Maritime Border Command and Operation Sovereign Borders

Key Points:

- It has been almost 11 years since the last successful maritime people smuggling venture to Australia (December 2013).
- It has been almost 11 years since the last known death at sea from maritime people smuggling ventures bound for Australia (December 2013).

Key Statistics:

OSB Key Statistics	Since OSB Establishment 18SEP2013 – 30SEP2024	Since Last Estimates 31MAY2024 – 30SEP2024
Successful¹ maritime people smuggling ventures	22 maritime people smuggling ventures	0 maritime people smuggling ventures
Total maritime people smuggling ventures under OSB	83 maritime people smuggling ventures	6 maritime people smuggling ventures
Returns to country of origin or country of departure under OSB²	1,227 people from 54 maritime people smuggling ventures	91 people from 5 maritime people smuggling ventures
Transfers to a regional processing country (RPC) under OSB	1,083 people from 29 maritime people smuggling ventures	47 people from 4 maritime people smuggling ventures
Disruptions by foreign law enforcement partners³	3,672 potential irregular immigrants (PIIs) disrupted in source and transit countries	0 PIIs disrupted in source and transit countries

¹ 'Successful' maritime people smuggling ventures are defined in this brief as those not disrupted, turned back, returned, or transferred to a regional processing country (RPC).

² Some maritime people smuggling ventures resolved across more than one line of effort are included in both the 'return to country of origin' and 'transfer to RPC' counts.

³ Disruption statistics are provided by AFP posts, based on advice provided by foreign law enforcement, and are indicative only as they are subject to a range of factors that may affect accuracy and quality. Post experience is that results are typically under-reported because arrests in regional locations are occasionally not reported.

- On 5 April 2019, CJATF directed that only ventures targeting Australia were to be included in statistics. This is to be effective from 1 March 2019. Previous statistics also included ventures destined for NZ given the high likelihood of them ending up as unintentional arrivals to Australia.
- From 1 January 2023 statistics include offshore disruptions of human trafficking ventures with a suspected maritime nexus.



Recent OSB Activity (as at 30 September 2024)

Key Event	Total	Comments
Maritime people smuggling ventures resolved by OSB in 2024 (calendar year)	11	All 202 persons on board the ventures were either safely returned to their country of origin or departure, or transferred to a RPC
Maritime people smuggling ventures resolved by OSB in 2023 (calendar year)	4	All 74 persons on board the ventures were either safely returned to their country of origin or departure, or transferred to a RPC
Maritime people smuggling ventures resolved by OSB in 2022 (calendar year)	7	All 199 persons on board the ventures were safely returned to their country of origin or departure.
Maritime people smuggling ventures resolved by OSB in 2021 (calendar year)	0	There were no interceptions or returns of maritime people smuggling ventures by Australian authorities in 2021
Maritime people smuggling ventures resolved by OSB in 2020 (calendar year)	1	All 8 persons on board the venture were safely returned to their country of departure
Maritime people smuggling ventures resolved by OSB in 2019 (calendar year)	3	All 38 persons on board the ventures were safely returned to their country of origin

Key Events (as at 30 September 2024)

Key Event	Comments
Last turn back under OSB	A venture was resolved in July 2024 by turn back. All 74 persons on board were safely turned back to their country of origin or departure, consistent with Australia's international protection obligations.
Last transfer to Regional Processing	The last transfer to regional processing occurred in September 2024 involving the safe transfer of seven UMA to regional processing.
Last successful people smuggling venture	Arrived 19 December 2013 . All subsequent ventures have been successfully resolved under the OSB framework.
Last known death at sea	There have been no known deaths at sea from maritime people smuggling ventures known to be targeting Australia <i>en route</i> to Australia since 9 December 2013 .



Key Brief Number: ABF-02
PDR Number: SB24-000883

Consultation:

Area	Title and position
ABF	Operations Law, JATF OSB HQ, People Smuggling Intelligence, MBC, ABF International, Civil Maritime Capability
Home Affairs	Chief Finance Officer, Chief Statistician
Other	AFP, DFAT, PM&C, Defence, Attorney General's Department

Related Briefs:

- SB24-000898 – JATF OSB Back Pocket Brief
- SB24-000899 – JATF OSB Strategic Communications Back Pocket Brief

Cleared through:	A/g Deputy Commander Joint Agency Task Force Operation Sovereign Borders – 2 October 2024
Final clearance: Position: Date:	RADM Brett Sonter Commander Joint Agency Task Force Operation Sovereign Borders 08 October 2024



KEY BRIEF

Supplementary Estimates Hearing – November 2024

Topic: Detention
Group: Regional Operations
Division: Onshore Detention

Key Points:

- Immigration detention is a key pillar in the border management and immigration compliance continuum, maintaining the integrity of the migration program and providing a deterrent as part of Australia's strong border control measures.
- While immigration detention is a measure of last resort, it provides an escalation option where other less coercive compliance measures have not been effective in eliciting voluntary compliance with requirements, such as engagement to achieve voluntary departure from the community.
- A prison like culture has been a sustained feature of the Immigration Detention Network (IDN) for many years with the majority of the detainee population comprising of those who have had a visa refused or cancelled on character grounds. This poses complex security and safety risks to the IDN.
- The Department takes seriously the health and wellbeing of detainee as well as the safety and security of detainees, staff and visitors within the IDN.
- When children are detained, the Department, including Australian Border Force, works closely to support best practice and adherence to child safeguarding obligations. Children are not held in immigration detention centres.
- As at 01 July 2024, funding for the IDN has reverted from 1400 detainees to 1000 detainees.
- The Department is currently undertaking a high-risk, high-value procurement activity for future immigration detention services with the outcome published on AusTender once finalised.



Key Statistics:

Immigration Detention Network

- As at 30 September 2024, there were 984 detainees in the IDN. Of these:
 - less than five (5) were children
 - less than five (5) were transitory persons who were transferred to Australia from Nauru.
 - 18 were (suspected) Illegal Foreign Fishers detained under the *Migration Act 1958* and were accommodated at the Northern alternative place of detention (APOD) in Northern Territory.

Table 1: Key IDN statistics as at 30 September 2024

	Male	Female	Criminal History	S501 Visa Cancellation*	Unauthorised Maritime Arrival (UMA)	Transitory Person^	Assessed as High to Extreme Risk~	Placed in alternative place of detention (APOD)
Number in IDN	935	49	824	560	108	<5	685	59
% of detainees	95.0%	5.0%	83.7%	56.9%	11.0%	<1.0%	69.6%	6.0%

*S501 visa cancellation figure does not include UMAs who may have had a temporary visa cancelled under s501 based on character or related grounds.

^ Transferred from Nauru.

~ Assessed by Facilities and Detainee Service Provider as being high to extreme risk

Detention Population

Table 2: Average end of year detainee population by financial year

2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
1,308	1,414	1,514	1,475	1,196	934	976

*as at 30 September 2024



Table 3: Average days in an immigration detention facilities (IDF)

30 June 2018	30 June 2019	30 June 2020	30 June 2021	30 June 2022	30 June 2023	30 June 2024	30 September 2024
436	485	552	673	742	711	565	513

**Figures have been rounded to the nearest one.*

Table 4: Proportion of persons in IDFs by group

Detention Group	30 June 2018	30 June 2019	30 June 2020	30 June 2021	30 June 2022	30 June 2023	30 June 2024	30 September 2024
Air Arrivals – non- immigration cleared	<3%	<5%	<2%	<1%	<2%	2.5%	2.9%	3.8%
UMA	24.6%	29.1%	33.2%	23.2%	14.5%	13.4%	11.7%	11.0%
Overstayer	19.3%	13.8%	9.8%	11.8%	11.7%	10.9%	18.4%	20.2%
Seaport Arrivals	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%	<1%	<1%
S501 visa cancellation	33.3%	26.1%	46.2%	53.5%	61.2%	64.3%	57.6%	56.9%
Other visa cancellation	19.5%	26.4%	9.4%	10.7%	10.4%	9.0%	7.1%	6.1%
Illegal Foreign Fishers	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	<2%	<2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Released by Department of Home Affairs
under the Freedom of Information Act 1982



Table 5: IDF population by top 10 citizenships

Citizenship	Total*
New Zealand	177
Vietnam	66
Iran	64
India	60
United Kingdom	46
Tonga	39
China	32
Pakistan	31
Sri Lanka	28
Iraq	27
Sudan	27

**as at 30 September 2024*

Use of hotel APODS

- As at 30 September 2024, 38 individuals were detained in hotel or apartment style APODs.
- Operational use of APODs remains high, primarily as a result of detaining illegal foreign fishers, those requiring removal after being refused immigration clearance (sometimes in a family group with minors) or those detainees with complex needs that cannot be accommodated within existing IDN facilities.

Incidents in Detention

- Incidents in detention include (but are not limited to) self-harm (threatened and actual), assaults, escapes, deaths, food and fluid refusal and use of force.
- The ratio of incidents have an upwards trend with the severity of incidents remaining high due to the detention population comprising of detainee with a criminal history (83.7%) as at 30 September 2024.



Table 6: Total incidents in IDFs

Financial Year	Number of Incidents	Average end of month detainee population	Ratio
2018-2019	20,626	1,308	15.8:1
2019-2020	16,711	1,414	11.8:1
2020-2021	16,477	1,514	10.9:1
2021-2022	15,617	1,475	10.6:1
2022-2023	14,159	1,196	11.8:1
2023-2024	11,457	934	12.3:1
2024-2025*	2,763	976	2.8:1

*As at 30 September 2024

Table 7: Self-harm incidents in IDFs

Financial Year	Number of self-harm incidents*			Average end of month detainee population	Approx. Ratio^
	Actual	Threat	Total		
2019-2020	185	462	647	1,414	0.5:1
2020-2021	195	523	718	1,514	0.5:1
2021-2022	173	442	615	1,475	0.4:1
2022-2023	98	345	443	1,196	0.4:1
2023-2024	74	264	338	934	0.4:1
2024-2025~	28	70	98	976	0.1:1

* Figures relate to the number of incidents, rather than the number of participants.

^ Approximate ratio represents total yearly incidents against number of detainees based on the average detainee population.

~ As at 30 September 2024



Table 8: Assaults in IDFs

Financial Year	Number of assault incidents*				Average end of month detainee population	Approx. Ratio^
	Minor Assault	Serious Assault	Sexual Assault	Total		
2019-2020	648	30	52	730	1,414	0.5:1
2020-2021	809	46	34	889	1,514	0.6:1
2021-2022	744	73	35	852	1,475	0.6:1
2022-2023	702	74	40	816	1,196	0.7:1
2023-2024	574	56	19	649	934	0.7:1
2024-2025~	177	20	10	207	976	0.2:1

* Figures relate to the number of incidents, rather than the number of participants.

^ Approximate ratio represents total yearly incidents against number of detainees based on the average detainee population.

~ As at 30 September 2024

Table 9: Contraband incidents

Financial Year	Number of contraband incidents*			Average end of month detainee population	Approx. Ratio^
	Drug-related	Other	Total		
2020-2021	297	881	1,178	1,514	0.8:1
2021-2022	225	722	947	1,475	0.6:1
2022-2023	273	757	1,030	1,196	0.9:1
2023-2024	219	451	670	934	0.7:1
2024-2025~	51	87	138	976	0.1:1

* Figures should be considered indicative only as not all drug related contraband incidents may be included, due to some recorded comments not detailing the type of contraband found.

^ Approximate ratio represents total yearly incidents against number of detainees based on the average detainee population.

Figures relating to contraband reflect the number of incidents not the amount of contraband items located.

Note Figures for Contraband include 'Contraband found' and 'Contraband brought by Visitor'.

~ As at 30 September 2024



Deaths in detention

- From 1 July 2010 to 30 September 2024, there were 46 deaths in held detention and 20 deaths in the community subject to Residence Determination. (This is a total of 66 deaths in immigration detention comprising of held detention and residence determination).

Table 10: Deaths in detention by year

Financial Year	Deaths in IDFs	Deaths in Residence Determination	Total
2018-2019	5	0	5
2019-2020	<5	<5	<5
2020-2021	<5	0	<5
2021-2022	5	<5	<10
2022-2023	<5	<5	5
2023-2024	0	<5	<5
2024-2025*	0	0	0
Total*	17	6	23

*As at 30 September 2024

Table 11: Use of force incidents by year

Financial Year	Number of use of force incidents			End of year detainee population	Approx. Ratio
	Planned	Unplanned	Total		
2020-2021	5,058	1,786	6,844	1,514	4.5:1
2021-2022	5,202	1,815	7,017	1,475	4.8:1
2022-2023	5,335	1,247	6,582	1,196	5.5:1
2023-2024	4,624	934	5,558	934	6.0:1
2024-2024*	1,081	263	1,344	976	1.4:1

* As at 30 September 2024



Table 12: Escapes from detention by year and by place of escape

Financial Year	Average detention population	Escape from			Total	Re-detained
		Medical	Other*	IDFs		
2019-2020	1,414	<5	0	<5	<5	<5
2020-2021	1,514	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5
2021-2022	1,475	<5	0	0	<5	<5
2022-2023	1,196	<5	0	<5	<5	<5
2023-2024	934	<5	<5	0	<5	<5
2024-2025 [^]	976	0	0	0	0	0

* Other* includes escapes from offsite hotel/motel APODs and escapes on escort to other locations. Figures for previous program years may have changed due to data cleansing.

[^] As at 30 September 2024

North West Point Immigration Detention Centre (NWPIDC), Christmas Island

- NWPIDC has been in a state of hot contingency since 01 October 2023 and can be operationalised as required subject to contractual requirements.



Detention contracts

- The Facilities and Detainee Services (FDS) contract with Serco provides a safe and secure environment in IDFs for detainees, staff, and visitors. It accommodates the unique needs, risks and challenges associated with each detainee, and the detainee cohort as a whole.
- The Detention Health Services (DHS) contract with International Health and Medical Services (IHMS) ensures that detainees have access to health procedure, treatment, assessment investigation or other clinical health services to a standard broadly commensurate with healthcare available to people in the Australian community through the public health system.
 - This includes the provision of clinical facilities and integrated primary healthcare, appropriate mental health clinical care and complex case management, health information and advice, and health promotion and disease-prevention activities.
- From time to time, the Department is able to make Additional Service Requests (ASRs) of the FDS and DHS providers, such as for additional personnel to meet operational requirements.

• **Table 13: Detention service provider contracts (as at 30 September 2024)**

Contract name and service provider	Value on AusTender	Term	Function
FDS: Serco Australia Pty Ltd	\$4.643 billion	Start: 11 December 2014 Expiry: 10 December 2024	• Garrison • Security • Transport and escort • Welfare and engagement • Facilities management
DHS: IHMS	\$789.05 million	Start: 11 December 2014 Expiry: 10 December 2024	• Onsite primary and mental healthcare with referral to allied and specialist health providers as required • Referral to hospitals for secondary or tertiary healthcare.



Consultation:

Area	Title and position
Home Affairs	Chief Statistician <i>The Chief Statistician has cleared all data contained within this brief.</i>

Related Briefs:

- SB24-000900 – Detention Population (Back Pocket)
- SB24-000901 – Immigration Detention Network (Back Pocket)
- SB24-000902 – Incidents in Detention (Back Pocket)
- SB24-000903 – Independent Reviews (Back Pocket)

Cleared through:	Budhy Tanddo, A/g Assistant Commissioner Onshore Detention 4 October 2024
Final clearance: Position: Date:	Vanessa Holben Deputy Commissioner 9 October 2024