

JOINT SELECTION COMMITTEE ON AUSTRALIA'S IMMIGRATION DETENTION
NETWORK
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Question No. 7

Senator Morrison asked the following question, following the hearing of 6 September 2011:

Mr Prendergast: We certainly were aware of critical issues with the infrastructure at the centre. The issue of the connecting fence really came to the forefront of my mind during the incident in March. I had not really understood the importance of that particular structural weakness but there was no doubt we had identified weaknesses in the infrastructure prior to that.

Mr MORRISON: Did you know whether local officers had knowledge of those weaknesses and had been raising them?

Mr Prendergast: I would need to take that on notice. We were certainly very much aware of it when the incident occurred. We were aware of, as I said, issues with the centre. We were aware of issues with Aqua-Lilac. What the exact level of knowledge on the ground was around the connecting fence prior to the incident, I am not sure.

Mr MORRISON: So there was CCTV and the fence. Were there other infrastructure security issues that either came to your knowledge afterwards or that you were aware of prior to that time?

The answer to the honourable Senator's question is as follows:

1. Yes
2. Infrastructure security issues identified prior to March 2011 were:
 - Tent locations proposed for the area between the perimeter fence and the Red sector within the IDC, which could not be locked down. Each large tent designed to accommodate 50 clients.
 - The proposed cyclone fencing surrounding the tents would provide access to the Administration block if breached. The Administration block housed AFP, DIAC and SERCO personnel.
 - A new housing area that was under construction at the time which was located outside the perimeter security fence.
 - Doors to individual cells could be secured electronically but not closed electronically.
 - The IDC lockdown capability was ineffective and could be defeated by clients.
 - The electronic roller doors which were activated during lockdowns were kept open by jamming plastic chairs underneath.
 - The Electronic Detection and Deterrent System (EDDS) was not activated.

3. Infrastructure security issues identified after March 2011 were:

- Inherent flaws to the infrastructure and design of the NWP IDC to such an extent that protesting clients were able to access and remain on the roof-space of the NWP IDC with ease.
- There were numerous points throughout the complex from which clients could gain access to the roof. These included but were not limited to the medical centre, mechanics workshop, administration block and AFP offices. Access to the roof allowed clients to move freely throughout the complex.
- Inadequate CCTV capability.
- Clients had access to material to make improvised weapons such as wheelie bins, steel poles and pieces of timber and access to implements such as scissors.
- Wheelie bins unsecured and placed near climbing points.
- Air conditioning units located on walls close to entrances which could be used to climb.
- Clients had access to fire hoses which were used against security personnel.
- Lack of access to suitable facilities to manage non compliant and disruptive clients.
- Lack of effective perimeter and containment mechanisms.
- Lack of ability to adequately secure the Aqua/Lilac compound.
- Flaws in the design of the compound which allowed people to breach it from the outside.
- Inadequate perimeter fencing at the Aqua/Lilac compound which was pushed over by clients.