

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS  
AUSTRALIAN CRIME COMMISSION

**Question No. 114**

**Senator Humphries asked the following question at the hearing on 24 May 2012:**

- a) The Minister for Home Affairs, Jason Clare, recently announced that the ACC would be heading up the National Intelligence Assessment of the illegal firearms market in Australia. How much will this cost?
- b) Where is the funding and resources for this inquiry coming from?
- c) How many staff have been allocated to the National Intelligence Assessment?
- d) How long will the inquiry take?
- e) What other agencies are involved in the inquiry?
- f) Are those agencies contributing staff or funding to the inquiry?
- g) Does the ACC believe that the 2009-10 funding cuts to Customs cargo screening have had an effect on the amount of illegal weapons and drugs smuggled through our borders?
- h) Do you believe an adequate amount of cargo is being inspected and/or examined?
- i) Are you aware of any cases of corruption amongst Customs officers or links to organised criminal syndicates?
- j) Has this increased in recent years?
- k) If so, what do you think is the driving factor for this surge in corrupt activity?

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

- a) It is difficult to accurately cost the National Illicit Firearm Assessment (NIFA). The assessment relied on the contribution of many agencies and the ACC is unable to quantify the cost of resources that each agency incurred in supporting the NIFA.

A project team was established within the ACC to deliver the NIFA. This dedicated team consisted of five analysts—including one firearm technical expert—over sighted by one SES officer. It is estimated that the salary cost of the dedicated analysis team is \$232,000. Taking into consideration other non salary costs such as travel, the total cost to the ACC is estimated to be \$250,000. This estimate excludes additional costs associated with incidental support provided within the ACC.

- b) The funding and resources to undertake the assessment was met by each individual agency involved in the assessment. No additional funding was provided to undertake the assessment.
- c) A project team was established within the ACC to deliver the NIFA. This dedicated team consisted of five analysts—including one firearm technical expert—over sighted by one SES officer. This does not include 'incidental' support provided by other areas of the ACC, including collection resources.
- d) The Minister for Home Affairs and Justice announced the development of the firearm assessment on 12 February 2012 and the National Illicit Firearm Assessment was completed on 23 May 2012.

e) Information and data to inform the assessment was sought from key identified agencies listed below:

- Attorney-General's Department
- Australian Customs and Border Protection Service
- Australian Federal Police
- Australian Federal Police – ACT Policing
- CrimTrac
- Defence Security Agency
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- New South Wales Police Force
- New South Wales Crime Commission
- Northern Territory Police
- Office of National Assessments
- Queensland Police Service
- South Australia Police
- Tasmania Police
- Victoria Police
- Western Australia Police.

Due to the limited timeframe in which the ACC was requested to deliver the assessment, broader consultation was not possible.

f) The agencies listed above provided data and information to the ACC to inform the assessment. The costs of providing the information and data was met by each agency.

g) Changes to Customs and Border Protection screening processes were not examined in sufficient detail to allow the ACC to make an informed judgment on the effects of any funding cuts to Customs and Border Protection.

h) It is not the role of the ACC to determine Customs and Border Protection screening processes. The ACC is not in a position to ascertain whether inspection numbers are adequate.

i) j) k) The purpose of the NIFA was to provide a contemporaneous intelligence picture on the Australian licit and illicit firearm market, including analysis of the use of firearms by criminals. The assessment did not focus on any potential corruption within agencies, analysis of this, nor associated factors.