

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS  
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

**Question No. 176**

**Senator Rhiannon asked the following question in writing at the hearing on 24 May 2012:**

NOSIC's website lists a wide range of areas that the intelligence or open source information collection covers which is far broader than simply environmental interests.

- a) Is NOSIC gathering open source information about Indigenous activist groups, and any activist groups that have an interest in Indigenous issues?
- b) Does NOSIC's work also entail Intel collection on individual activists?
- c) Does NOSIC collect information on those Indigenous activists or related groups for both the private and the public sectors?
- d) Do any NOSIC staff belong to activist groups or become online supporters of groups?
- e) Does NOSIC have any Indigenous staff?
- f) If so, do they advise NOSIC on the cultural context of the language used on Indigenous or Indigenous-related websites, from which NOSIC gathers and interprets Open Source Information for the AFP?
- g) Have NOSIC staff undergone cultural awareness training, if so, what authority conducted those workshops?
- h) What Australian government body could take on responsibility for monitoring intelligence gathering practices and ethics of private security and intelligence companies?
- i) Are any NOSIC staff former employees of the Victorian Police Operations Intelligence Unit?
- j) NOSIC and GEG (parent company) websites state staff come from a range of backgrounds that include former law enforcement personnel and former defence personnel. What proportion of NOSIC staff are former AFP and VicPol officers?

Do you know which other government departments NOSIC gathers information for?

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

- a) NOSIC is a fully Australian owned company, based in Melbourne, who the AFP contracts to collect and provide open source information about any emerging or planned public protest.
- b) NOSIC's services contain only information that is widely and openly available to the public, academia and the private sector. It does not contain any analysis or intelligence assessment but serves to complement other information.
- c) The AFP is unable to comment on issues outside of its contractual relationship with NOSIC.
- d) NOSIC has advised the AFP it does not engage in any covert or clandestine activities whereby employees use fictitious names to either:
  - i. Infiltrate meetings
  - ii .Engage with or interact with activists online

- iii. Disrupt or influence protest activities
- iv. Physically attend protests
- v. Physically conduct surveillance of protesters or protest activities
- e) The AFP is unable to answer this question.
- f) The AFP is unable to answer this question.
- g) The AFP is unable to answer this question.
- h) The AFP is unable to answer this question.
- i) The AFP is unable to answer this question.
- j) The AFP is unable to answer this question.