

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN CRIME COMMISSION

Question No. 2

Senator Barnett asked the following questions at the hearing on 18 February 2008:

- a) Please provide the Committee with the details of the outline of measures and the operational involvement the Australian Crime Commission has in the Northern Territory intervention measures.
- b) With regard to the Northern Territory intervention, please provide a breakdown of where the Australian Crime Commission is involved, what the Australian Crime Commission is doing and how many staff are allocated to each operational area.
- c) Please provide information on the work the Australian Crime Commission is doing on the Indigenous Task Force.

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

- (a) & (b) The ACC's National Indigenous Violence and Child Abuse Intelligence Task Force (NIITF) and the Northern Territory Emergency Response Task Force (NTERTF) are separate bodies with differing objectives. However the NIITF's Northern Territory activities provide intelligence which assists the operations of the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER). In addition to these activities the NTER legislation passed in August 2007, allows the ACC to extend its coercive powers to include Indigenous violence and child abuse.

At an operational level the NIITF and the NTERTF exchange information on activities in the Northern Territory through regular meetings and via the dissemination of intelligence reports related to situations, or persons of interest in the NT. The ACC also briefs the Australian Government Business Managers who are contracted under the NTER to coordinate Australian Government work with communities in the NT.

In relation to the Northern Territory Emergency Response announced in 2007, the *Families, Community Services And Indigenous Affairs And Other Legislation Amendment (Northern Territory National Emergency Response And Other Measures) Act 2007*, allows the extension of the ACC's special coercive powers to include Indigenous violence and child abuse. The Board approved the use of these coercive powers on 5 February 2008 to enable the NIITF to undertake a special intelligence operation on Indigenous Violence and Child Abuse (SIO-IVCA).

Staff in the Darwin and Alice Springs offices will coordinate the application of the coercive powers, although NIITF team members from each of the states and territories will assist with the application and intelligence handling requirements as required.

Currently, there are 5 FTE staff in the Darwin Office and 10.6 FTE in the Alice Springs Office. Nationally, in total, there are 34.4 FTE staff on the NIITF. The number of staff in each operational area is as follows:

| Title/Role | NT | National |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Analyst | 7 | 15 |
| Graduate | 0 | 2 |
| Head of Task Force | 1 | 1 |
| Investigator | 2 | 5 |
| Lawyer | 0 | 1 |
| Manager Intelligence | 1 | 1 |
| National Project Manager | 0 | 1 |
| Office Manager Darwin | 1 | 1 |
| Policy Officer | 0 | 1 |
| Principal Specialist | 1 | 1 |
| Project Officer | 1 | 1 |
| Psychologist | 0 | 1 |
| Research Fellow | 0 | 1 |
| Support Officer Intelligence | 2 | 4 |
| Support Officer Operations | 1 | 1 |
| Grand Total | 17 | 37 |

(c) The Task Force is responsible for collecting, collating, analysing and sharing intelligence on Indigenous violence and child abuse.

Since the beginning of its operations in December 2006 the NIITF has undertaken coordinated and comprehensive deployments in rural and remote areas of Australia (NSW, Qld, Tas, NT, WA, SA) with an initial focus on communities in the Northern Territory and the Kimberley region of WA.

During this period the Task Force has made 129 visits to 101 communities nation-wide and has attended over 1,200 meetings across Australia (as at 29 February 2008). Additionally, intelligence about particular persons of interest, or particular incidents has been provided to law enforcement and Commonwealth and state/territory agencies. In total, as at 29 February 2008, there have been:

- 241 disseminations to law enforcement and government agencies; and
- over 700 reports have been uploaded onto the Australian Criminal Intelligence Database (ACID); and
- six comprehensive intelligence reports have been produced on situations or persons of interest.

This sharing of information has assisted current or ongoing investigations, added to the case knowledge of child abuse; and helped agencies identify possible cases of the misuse of public funds.

The NIITF has also developed a multi-disciplinary research program using both in-house and external resources. The program aims to value add to the intelligence collected by the ACC NIITF on child abuse and violence and will expand directly upon the findings of operational deployments. A series of papers is currently being researched by the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC); papers are also being developed by a NIITF Research Fellow. Outcomes of the intelligence collection and research processes will contribute to a whole of government approach to policy development in Indigenous Affairs.

The SIO-IVCA, described above will form an integral part of the NIITF's activities.