

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS  
AUSTRALIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE ORGANISATION

**Question No. 94**

**Senator Cash asked the following question at the hearing on 25 May 2011:**

- a) Why are security assessments not conducted on people under the age of 16?
- b) How does ASIO verify the ages of people under 16?
- c) What procedures are in place to prevent IMA's using false ages to prevent being subjected to security assessments and receive community detention rather than going into an immigration detention centre?

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

- a) ASIO does not generally conduct security assessments of Irregular Maritime Arrival (IMA) minors under the age of 16 years. As the Director-General advised during Senate Estimates, the likelihood of an individual representing a substantial security risk as a minor is less. However, ASIO can, and on occasions does, conduct security assessment of minors if requested to do so or if ASIO considers it is necessary for reasons of national security. Where an interview is undertaken as part of an assessment of a minor, ASIO policy requires appropriate additional measures to be in place, including additional senior-level authorisation. There are currently no IMA minors under 16 years referred to ASIO for security assessment.
- b) DIAC determines the identity, including date of birth, of IMAs. Where ASIO, through its own investigations, assesses an IMA has provided misleading information regarding their identity to DIAC, ASIO passes this information to DIAC for its own purposes.
- c) Questions regarding procedures in place to prevent IMAs providing false ages should be directed to DIAC.