

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION

Question No. 109

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

- a) Can you provide data for the past 12 months of how many sea, air and postal consignments have been inspected and examined? And can you provide data of how many consignments or parcels have come into the country for the same period?
- b) Has there been any staff cuts to cargo screening staff over the past 3 years? If so, how many and from which facilities?
- c) Has there been any variation to work hours at any of the facilities?
- d) Has there been an increase or decrease in illegal tobacco smuggling over the past six months?
- e) How many Customs officers have been found to be involved with criminal activity, corrupt activity or any other activity that would be considered breaching the integrity of Customs over the past 12 months? Please provide figures since the financial year of 07/08?
- f) How many cases have been referred to ACLEI?

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

a)

Volumes, Inspections and Examinations 2011/2012

		2011/12
Import Volumes	Air	18.4 million
	Sea (manifest lines)	2.6 million
	Parcels	64.8 million
	Total International Mail	183.7 million
Inspections	Air	1.5 million
	Sea (twenty foot equivalent units)	102,247
	Parcels	20.6 million
	Total international mail	41.2 million
Examinations	Air	80,707
	Sea (twenty foot equivalent units)	14,740
	Parcels	198,651
	Total international mail	215,643

b)

There was a reduction of 63.6 full time equivalent (FTE) staff between 2008/09 and 2009/10 as part of the implementation of the increased intelligence-led risk-based approach in 2009/10.

By facility this comprised:

Air Cargo Operations

- -14.4 FTE in New South Wales
- -9.0 FTE in Victoria
- -11.0 FTE in Queensland
- -3.5 FTE in Western Australia
- -1.0 FTE in South Australia

Sea Cargo Operations (Container Examination Facilities)

- -3.3 FTE in New South Wales
- -3.7 FTE in Victoria
- -13.6 FTE in Queensland
- -5.5 FTE in Western Australia
- +1.4 FTE in South Australia

All changes at these locations were related to implementing an intelligence-led approach to cargo, and have not impacted Customs and Border Protection's ability to detect illicit goods.

Since the introduction of an intelligence-led risk-based approach to cargo screening, the number of detections of illicit items has increased significantly, including:

- More than double the number of detections in the air cargo stream from 870 in 2007-08 to 1,827 in 2011-12; and
- A threefold increase in the weight of drugs and precursors detected in the air cargo stream from 309 kilograms in 2007-08 to 926 kilograms in 2011-12.

c)

Upon implementation of the increased intelligence-led risk-based approach in July 2009, hours of operation were changed in the following areas:

- Air Cargo Operations:
 - New South Wales ~ from 133 hours to 126 hours;
 - Victoria ~ from 155.75 hours to 118.25 hours; and
 - Queensland ~ from 84.5 hours to 69 hours.

In Western Australia, there was a roster change in August 2010 to enable enhanced coverage of the peak cargo arrival period, but no change to overall number of hours of operation.

- Sea Cargo Operations at the Container Examination Facilities (CEFs):
 - Brisbane CEF ~ from 99 hours to 51 hours; and
 - Fremantle CEF ~ from 87.5 hours to 75.5 hours.

There were no significant changes to Sydney, Melbourne or Adelaide CEF hours of operation. Since then, CEF hours of operation have remained fairly constant, with the exception of extended hours in response to operational requirements.

From August 2009, in the international mail environment at Sydney Gateway Facility, hours of operation were extended by 9.5 hours to include 0630 to 1600 Saturdays. Hours of operation remain constant at Melbourne, Perth and Brisbane international mail facilities. Hours at all facilities are varied from time to time to meet peak workloads.

d)

During the six months from October 2011 to March 2012, Customs and Border Protection made 25 seizures of smuggled tobacco products in sea cargo, consisting of 105 tonnes of tobacco and 69 million cigarettes. These importations represented a potential revenue evasion of \$81 million plus GST.

In the previous six months (April-September 2011), Customs and Border Protection made 23 seizures of smuggled tobacco products, consisting of 102 tonnes of tobacco and 70 million cigarettes. These importations represented a potential revenue evasion of \$67 million plus GST.

Based on these figures, Customs and Border Protection detections of illegal tobacco smuggling during the six month period October 2011 to March 2012 have remained essentially unchanged compared with the previous six month period.

e)

Financial year 2007/2008: Nil

Financial year 2008/2009: Two officers were the subject of Briefs of Evidence for CDPP consideration. One was successful prosecution. The second was not successful at court.

Financial year 2009/2010: Four officers were subject of four Briefs of Evidence for CDPP consideration. One successful prosecution. The CDPP determined two were prosecutions were not in the public interest. The CDPP are deliberating on a final matter.

Law Enforcement agencies also charged four Customs and Border Protection officers for offences occurring outside the work environment. Of these, three charges were dismissed or withdrawn.

Financial year 2010/2011: One officer was the subject of a Brief of Evidence for CDPP consideration. The CDPP are deliberating on this matter.

Law Enforcement agencies charged three Customs and Border Protection officers for offences occurring outside the work environment. Two of these officers resigned and the third officer was found not guilty in court.

Financial year 2011/2012:

Law Enforcement agencies charged three Customs and Border Protection officers during this period. Two officers were charged for offences that occurred outside the work environment. These two officers are currently suspended. The third officer was charged for an offence (theft) that occurred in the work environment. The officer's employment has been terminated.

f)

Customs and Border Protection came under the jurisdiction of ACLEI on 1 January 2011. As at 1 July 2012, 48 allegations have been referred to ACLEI by Customs and Border Protection.