

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

**Question No. 42**

**Senator Brandis asked the following question at the hearing on 18 October 2011:**

**Senator BRANDIS:** Let me just ask you this: were the number of hours of aerial surveillance conducted in 2010-11 by the aggregate of the Customs Dash 8 aircraft and the RAAF assets greater or less than in the previous year?

**Ms Grant:** In terms of hours, I would need to take that on notice.

**Senator BRANDIS:** Do you know?

**Ms Grant:** No, I do not know because we do not record our results in terms of hours. We record our results—

**Senator BRANDIS:** What is your benchmark measurement then? If it is not hours of surveillance, what is your benchmark measurement?

**Ms Grant:** It is the area of surveillance coverage we achieve, how many million square nautical miles we cover in the areas of interest—

...

**Senator BRANDIS:** I do not think this should be as hard as perhaps I am making it. I want, according to your benchmark, a comparison—comparing like with like—as to whether there was more or less aerial surveillance in 2010-11 than in 2009-10. Whatever the benchmark or the yardstick is, I just want to know whether you undertook more aerial surveillance last year than in the previous year.

**Mr Carmody:** I think Ms Grant has already answered that, if you go back to the point before—and I am sure she will correct me if I am wrong—when she indicated our benchmark of square nautical miles. I should point out that that is not static. It is not just a case of looking at the map and saying, 'Well, there's that many square nautical miles.' It is the number of times you fly over that adds to the square nautical miles coverage, so it is a cumulative total, to address the point you were making earlier. I think Ms Grant has already indicated that, because of the composition of that flying, particularly the long-haul flights to Christmas Island—you would be aware of the tragedy there and some of the increased flying—the overall cumulative square nautical miles covered were increased.

**Ms Grant:** I can confirm that the million square nautical miles that we flew in 2010-11 was more than we flew in 2009-10.

**Senator BRANDIS:** Do you have those figures in front of you? Could you read them onto the record for me?

**Ms Grant:** We achieved 147.76 million square nautical miles in the 2010-11 year which exceeded the PBS target by 2.76 million, the target being 145. I do not have with me the exact number of hours for the 2009-10 year but I do recall that we came in slightly under target for last year so that is why I can say that 2010-11 was greater than 2009-10, but I would need to take on notice to provide you with the precise number for 2009-10.

**Senator BRANDIS:** Could you do that for me please?

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

Aerial surveillance coverage for 2009/10 was 142.11 million square nautical miles.