

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

**Question No. 16**

**Senator Humphries asked the following question at the hearing on 16 October 2012:**

How many Customs staff are currently based on Cocos Island and Christmas Island?

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

**Staff based on Cocos (Keeling) Islands**

Prior to May 2012, the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service did not maintain a permanent presence on Cocos (Keeling) Islands. The Australian Federal Police (AFP) based on Cocos (Keeling) Islands undertook all Customs and Immigration functions.

**2011/12**

Rapid response teams comprising eight (8) Western Australia based Customs and Border Protection Enforcement Officers were deployed to Cocos (Keeling) Islands on two occasions (16 May and 20 May 2012) in response to two SIEV arrivals. From 10 June 2012 to 30 June 2012 teams of eight (8) Customs and Border Protection Enforcement Officers were deployed to Cocos (Keeling) Islands on weekly rotations. These teams were supported by three (3) Maritime Enforcement Officers operating an inshore response vessel.

**2012/13**

From 1 July 2012 to 9 August 2012 teams of eight (8) Customs and Border Protection Enforcement Officers were deployed to Cocos (Keeling) Islands on weekly rotations.

From 1 July 2012 to 31 July 2012 these teams were supported by three (3) to four (4) Maritime Enforcement Officers operating an inshore response vessel.

From 23 July 2012 to 3 November 2012, the Australian Customs Vessel (ACV) Hervey Bay was stationed at Cocos (Keeling) Islands with a standard compliment of 10 Officers. Based on operational demands, this compliment has been increased to 12 Officers for periods of higher operational tempo. From 3 November 2012, ACV Triton has been stationed at Cocos (Keeling) Islands with a standard compliment of 38 crew (16 contracted crew, 21 Maritime Enforcement Officers and one (1) Paramedic).

From 10 August 2012, teams of nine (9) Customs and Border Protection Enforcement Officers have been deployed to Cocos (Keeling) Islands on weekly rotations. Based on operational demands, these teams have been increased up to 12 Officers for short periods of higher operational tempo.

**Staff Based on Christmas Island**

The Australian Customs and Border Protection Service maintains a presence of three (3) full time Officers on Christmas Island. These officers are supplemented by up to nine (9) locally engaged Acting Officers of Customs employed on a casual basis, of whom approximately four (4) are available at any one time.

**2011/12**

From 1 July 2011 to 11 May 2012 two (2) additional Customs and Border Protection Enforcement Officers were deployed to Christmas Island on two week rotations.

From 11 May 2012 to 30 June 2012 three (3) additional Customs and Border Protection Enforcement Officers were deployed to Christmas Island on two week rotations.

**2012/13**

From July 2012, four (4) additional Customs and Border Protection Enforcement Officers have been deployed to Christmas Island on two week rotations.