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### **Home Affairs intelligence led data based border targeting achieves significant border outcomes and generates significant investigative opportunities**

#### **Background**

In 2018, the Department of Home Affairs Intelligence Division initiated a project to discover previously unknown travelling child sexual exploitation offenders and those carrying child abuse material (CAM) across the border. Targets identified in this project are generally not identifiable through traditional intelligence analysis or existing border targeting.

The Australian border presents a unique environment for targeting, intervention and collection. This environment is one characterised by unique datasets, specialist intervention and questioning powers and capabilities, and the evidenced ability to not only generate border detections, but also provide valuable operational leads for investigation.

By combining unique Home Affairs data with Australian Border Force (ABF) intervention powers, and applying sophisticated threat discovery capabilities such as data profiling, Intelligence Division's collaboration with the Fintel Alliance and AUSTRAC has successfully merged financial analysis with intelligence-led data based border targeting to achieve results. This has achieved significant results in countering child exploitation.

#### **Outcomes**

Home Affairs Intelligence Division has contributed to the detection of child abuse material at the border, identified post border investigation opportunities and facilitated discovery of previously unknown travelling child sex offenders.

#### **Overview of outcomes**

Intelligence Division's approach and collaboration with Australian Border Force (ABF) partners has generated:

- 62 CAM detections at the border;
- 24 detections of other material, frequently borderline CAM;
- A significant number of referrals for investigation; and
- Large amounts of information and derogatory intelligence collected revealing activities of previously unknown child exploitation targets.

These outcomes have created opportunity for post border activity directly leading to:

- 27 arrests by investigative partners in the ABF or Australian Federal Police (AFP) Joint Anti Child Exploitation Teams (JACET);
- 23 facilitators arrested overseas, with the identification of a further 17, from JACET investigations and AFP activity; and
- 72 children rescued or removed from harm, with the identification of a further 68, also from JACET investigations and AFP activity.

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Notably, since international travel re-commenced in early 2022, 31 significant events have occurred as a result of the Home Affairs Intelligence Division and AUSTRAC data profile, with 17 targets being detected with CAM at the border, nine of which were subsequently arrested.

### Case Study A:

- On 25 October 2019, a 56-year-old Australian male was detected with CAM at the border. The male had not come to the attention of law enforcement for child exploitation activity or suspicion and was targeted as a result of a Home Affairs Intelligence Division and AUSTRAC data profile.
- A subsequent JACET investigation resulted in:
  - The male being charged with over 75 offences;
  - Three facilitators arrested overseas, with a further 17 identified;
  - Seven children rescued or removed from harm overseas, with a further 52 identified; and
  - <https://www.afp.gov.au/news-media/media-releases/queensland-man-charged-alleged-online-sexual-abuse-50-philippines-children>.

### Case study B.

- On 28 February 2020, a 66-year-old Australian male was detected with CAM at the border. The male had not come to the attention of law enforcement for child exploitation activity or suspicion, and was targeted as a result of a Home Affairs intelligence Division and AUSTRAC data profile.
- A subsequent JACET investigation resulted in:
  - The male pleading guilty to 50 offences, which included charges relating to viewing, remotely instructing and recording the sexual abuse of children on 55 occasions between March 2018 and January 2020;
  - Five facilitators arrested overseas;
  - 15 children rescued or removed from harm overseas, with a further 52 identified; and
  - The identified male was sentenced to more than 15 years' imprisonment.

### Update to outcome in previous submission

The previous submission detailed the case of a 58-Year-old Australian male through the following dot points:

- A person of interest (POI) was identified in one of the profiles, who previously had not come to the attention of law enforcement. Following AUSTRAC's referral, Home Affairs placed the POI on a watch list due to financial behaviour consistent with purchasing or accessing child exploitation material.
- On 18 December 2019 the POI was arrested by the Australian Federal Police at Melbourne Airport and charged with possessing, controlling, producing, distributing or obtaining child abuse material outside Australia.
- The POI's occupation was stated as a School Principal, and he had been based in Singapore since August 2019. Prior to this role, the POI worked at international schools in China, Qatar and Kuwait.

A JACET investigation has progressed since the last submission, with the POI pleading guilty to 13 charges and sentenced to five years gaol, with a non-parole period of three years. The POI will be a registered offender for life.

### Current and future development

Intelligence Division continues to contribute to operational successes combatting child abuse through improved analytical tradecraft and close collaboration with a range of intelligence, operational and policy partners.

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This contribution is reflected in the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse and First Commonwealth Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021–2024, specifically Theme 4: Offender Prevention and Intervention item 16:

ITEM	MEASURE	OVERVIEW	ROYAL COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT
16	Improve ways to find unknown child sex offenders at the border	The Department of Home Affairs will expand its Child Exploitation Border Targeting Team. This will improve the team's ability to gather information and increase referrals for investigation.	Recommendation 6.24 from the <i>Final Report</i>  Overall intent of the <i>Criminal Justice Report</i>	Department of Home Affairs

Intelligence Division has increased border targeting of child-like sex dolls through dedicated collaboration with Five-Eyes border partners and private industry, and utilisation of online and non-traditional data sources. This has already resulted in significant outcomes and the protection of children. For example:

- In January 2021, an Intelligence Division border profile identified an air cargo consignment suspected of containing a child-like sex doll and destined for a 61-year-old Australian male in regional NSW. Subsequent collection, analysis and referral of high-risk online activity and purchase behaviour resulted in search and seizure warrants and the arrest of the intended recipient of the consignment.
- The 61-year-old male was recently gaoled for five years for importing a child-sex doll and installing cameras in a 12-year-old child's bedroom.
- <https://www.dailyliberal.com.au/story/7925256/shocked-and-betrayed-coonamble-man-caught-with-child-abuse-material-and-child-sex-doll-remains-behind-bars/>

Home Affairs Intelligence Analysts have been embedded in the AFP-led Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation (ACCCE) to contribute to and support ACCCE functions and priorities:

- Collaboration between the ACCCE and Home Affairs Intelligence Division to utilise existing data sets for border targeting has resulted in 11 detections of CAM at the border since mid-2022. These detection outcomes and other activity occurred in relation to targets not identifiable through traditional methods or under current prioritisation.

Further collaboration and lines of effort by Intelligence Division are underway to utilise analytical tradecraft, knowledge and data to match, prioritise, assess and refer child exploitation where targets do not interact with the Australian border, or targets seek to gain access to children for sexual exploitation through migration and citizenship pathways.

### Ongoing and future challenges

Information sharing, technology and border intervention response capability and capacity are the main challenges to the ongoing and future success on Home Affairs Intelligence Division's child exploitation targeting project:

- The precision and efficiency of current data profiles, as well as the speed at which new financially themed profiles can be developed is limited by data sharing restrictions between AUSTRAC and Home Affairs. This results in the inability to develop and deploy fully automated data based profiles

## OFFICIAL

across combined live data sets of AUSTRAC (financial) and Home Affairs (travel, cargo, visa, citizenship).

- ABF technical capabilities and infrastructure to detect CAM on mobile devices is crucial, but limited by various factors. The size and storage capacity of modern devices, combined with the speed of IT software and hardware used to assess content makes this problematic.
  - ABF resources, training and capabilities have limitations. National inconsistency in approach and achievement of outcomes are evident and limit operational outcomes.
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