

COMMITTEE INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No.10)

Senator Kimberley Kitching asked the Department of Defence, upon notice, on 16 November 2021:

Submitters including Mr Jason Scanes have raised significant concerns about how the PCASS system has been used in relation to LEE certification and visa applications, arguing that results from this system have been used for purposes for which they were never intended, and that PCASS results have effectively been ‘weaponised’ to deny humanitarian assistance to legitimate applicants.

1. What was the intended purpose for which the PCASS system was used in assessing potential Afghan employees?
2. Please outline exactly how the PCASS system has been utilised by Defence, DFAT and Home Affairs in assessing applications for LEE certifications, and in visa application processing for certified LEEs and others seeking humanitarian visas.
3. How do Defence, Home Affairs and DFAT weigh the results of PCASS assessments alongside other forms of information about the character of an LEE applicant (for example, personal references from ADF members who worked with the individual)?
4. What records do Defence, DFAT and Home Affairs hold about PCASS results for Afghan staff involved in Australia’s operations?

The Department of Defence has provided the following answers to the Senator’s questions:

The Department of Defence did not use the PCASS system or any polygraph system to assess potential Afghan employees. Defence did not assess LEE applicants on character grounds. Defence does not hold any record of PCASS results for Afghan staff.