

**PARLIAMENTARY JOINT COMMITTEE ON LAW ENFORCEMENT**  
**EXAMINATION OF THE AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE ANNUAL REPORT**  
**2023–24**

**Australian Federal Police**

**Written Question on Notice**

**Senator Helen Polley, Chair, asked the following questions on 13 February 2025:**

1. Is there any further information that the AFP could provide on the Countering Foreign Interference Taskforce (discussed on pages 32–33 of the Annual Report)? In particular, how does the working relationship between the AFP and ASIO function? Are there any operations overseen by this Taskforce that the AFP can provide further insights on?
2. In the 2022–23 reporting period, the community confidence target for the AFP was not met and the AFP explained the intention to report on a restructured community confidence measure in the 2023–24 Annual Report. In the 2023–24 Annual Report, the updated community confidence performance measure 1.1.1 was met.
  - a. Could the AFP please provide further detail on how the community confidence target was restructured?
  - b. Further, the Annual Report specifies that the ‘reformulation of the performance measure from existing survey data means that we can determine historical trends for the new community confidence measures’ (page 15 of the Annual Report). Could the AFP provide more information on these historical trends?
3. The Annual Report 2023-24 specifies the AFP did not meet the performance target for specialist protective services response times under program 3.1 (page 43 of the Annual Report). How is the AFP working to rectify this issue and what steps are being taken to meet this performance measure in the next reporting period?
4. There was no result available for performance measure 1.1.7 (disruption count), which was attributed to the transition to the AFP’s new case management system (pp. 22–23 of the Annual Report). Can the AFP please elaborate on why the transition to a new case management system resulted in no result being available during the reporting period for 2023-24? Will there be further information in the next reporting period for this performance measure?

**The response to the senator’s question is as follows:**

1. The AFP and Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO)-led Counter Foreign Interference (CFI) Taskforce was established in 2020 to increase intelligence collection, assessment, and law enforcement capabilities to convert intelligence into operational outcomes. Along with AFP and ASIO, the CFI Taskforce has members from: Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre; Australian Signals Directorate; Australian

Geospatial-Intelligence Organisation; Office of National Intelligence; Australian Taxation Office; and Department of Defence.

The CFI Taskforce brings together the joint expertise, capabilities and powers of Commonwealth partner agencies to boost its ability to discover, investigate and mitigate the threat posed by espionage and foreign interference activity in Australia. The AFP has dedicated CFI Taskforce teams located in Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne who are responsible for investigating espionage and foreign interference.

The AFP through the CFI Taskforce is actively undertaking a number of investigations into espionage and foreign interference threats, and has charged 4 people since the introduction of espionage and foreign interference offences into the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth) in 2018. While some of these activities have attracted media interest, most CFI Taskforce actions to mitigate threats are not publicly visible

2.

- a. In the performance measure used up to 2022-23, the AFP measured ‘high confidence in the AFP’ as eight (8) or higher out of 10. This was inconsistent with similar measures used by State and Territory Police in the National Survey of Community Satisfaction with Policing (reported in the Report on Government Services), which uses the sum of ‘agree plus strongly agree’ to produce confidence and satisfaction statistics. Changing to a similar measures scale for this question in the AFP’s Community Confidence Survey (CCS) would have meant gaining greater comparability with State and Territory Police, while losing comparability with the AFP historical. As such, the closest approximation of ‘agree plus strongly agree’ was to adopt a definition of confidence as ‘(six) 6 or higher out of 10’.

To reinforce the AFP’s ambition to retain the confidence of the public the target was simultaneously increased from 75% to 85%. Also, the CCS data shows that Australians who self-identify as having a higher level of knowledge of the AFP also report having higher confidence in the AFP. The target for this aspect of community confidence was set at 90%. This approach was reviewed and endorsed by the AFP’s external Audit and Risk Committee prior to adoption.

- b. Measure results relating to confidence and understanding of the AFP are readily available and can be accessed each year commencing with the AFP’s 2017-18 Annual Report. Historical results and trends are shown in Figure 2.4 on page 15 of the 2023-24 AFP Annual Report, showing with confidence of above 90% (for the informed public) and above 85% overall for all years since 2017-18.
3. The shortfall in Specialist Protective Services performance measure 3.1 response to aviation incidents is contextualised by:
- responding officers prioritising public safety when arriving at priorities matters,

resulting in a delay in notifying their arrival at the incident,

- the continued growth in passenger numbers, increasingly geographically sprawling airports,
- incidents occurring on airborne aircraft causing insurmountable practicalities in Police response prior to that aircrafts arrival.

Ensuring sufficient resourcing due to the variable and complex Aviation environment whilst managing the increased pressures on the AFP to respond to a wide variety of priority crime types is an ongoing pressure. While according to the 2023–24 Community Confidence Survey, 94% of visitors to AFP-patrolled airports reported feeling safe or very safe, the AFP has nevertheless significantly increased the frequency, fidelity and detail of internal performance monitoring of aviation response data to ensure overall performance is proactively managed.

4. The AFP is currently in the process transitioning to a new case management system, and this transition has provided an opportunity to examine how disruptions are recorded and reported, in preparation for incorporating these requirements into the construction of the new system. The complexity of building a new case management system has meant that a wide variety of other features must be constructed before disruptions counts can be implemented. The decision to not report disruption count in the 2023-24 Annual Report aligns with best practices recommended by the Australian National Audit Office and the Department of Finance, which advise against reporting measures with data quality concerns.

Disruptions counts will be returned to the AFP suite of performance measures as soon as robust data can be produced, in line with good practices. It is possible a new disruption counts performance measure may not be comparable with the previous measure. While a disruption count is not currently available, the AFP will continue to provide compelling evidence of the value of our disruption activities through case studies included in the Annual Report.