

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS DEFENCE AND TRADE
INQUIRY INTO AUSTRALIA'S SANCTIONS REGIME

Australian Federal Police

Spoken question on notice

Senator Brimingham asked the following question on Friday 15 November 2024:

Senator Birmingham: Firstly to the AFP just on the actual assessment of Russian entities and assets in Australia. Over the last couple of years a number of questions on notice have been put to by Senator Paterson in relation to your assessments and in May 2023 AFP responded indicating that there were in excess of 1800 sanctioned Russian entities and individuals with 21 possibly the subject of the sanctions regime being identified in Australia in terms of assets implications there. In October 23 the AFP responded to a similar question indicating there were 23. By June 2024 the response from the AFP was that it has not identified any Australian based controlled assets. Are you able to explain to the committee the discrepancy in what you would believe there may have been 21 or 23 assets and also the degree of confidence you have that there are not any Australian based controlled assets?

The response to the senator's question is as follows:

The figures in question relate to certain points in time for the number of instances reported to the Australian Federal Police (AFP) of potential Australian-based assets that could be the subject of the sanctions regime. The first figure of 21 notifications being as at May 2023, which increased to 23 notifications as at October 2023. During the course of the AFP's investigations into these notifications, the AFP **did not** identify any Australian-based assets.

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Senator Brimingham asked the following question on Friday 15 November 2024:

1. Senator Birmingham: How many referrals of possible breaches or identifications of possible breaches have agencies made or discovered since 2022?

Mr Rice: I know there are currently four active investigations but I **will take on notice your timeframe of from 2022 with regards to referrals**. I don't have that date on me but happy to provide on notice.

2. Senator Birmingham: Of those four active investigations without compromising them how did those investigations come to be commenced? Were they referrals from DFAT as a result of their compliance work, were they referrals from civil society or others who've identified issues or from AFPs own investigations?

Mr Rice: I can speak to the latest referrals but I can find for you on notice the pathway but it is most likely the same as the recent referrals which is that we work closely with the Department, we hold regular meetings with them where we discuss the work that the Department is doing, where there may be crossover where they need to refer and where that need to refer occurs we then work very closely to scope both the investigation and direction and what may be required and find the response to something where the outcome can be adequately achieved and in that last instance that is what occurred in the matters that were referred to us. That investigation is **currently ongoing and I'll take the further three investigations on notice** but I would suggest they would be coming from the Australian Sanctions Office through that working group pathway.

The response to the senator's question is as follows:

1. The Australian Federal Police has received five (5) reports of crime from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade regarding breaches or possible breaches of the *Autonomous Sanctions Act 2011* law **since 2022**.
2. Of the four current active investigations, all of these investigations commenced following reports of crime received by the Australian Federal Police from the Australian Sanctions Office.