

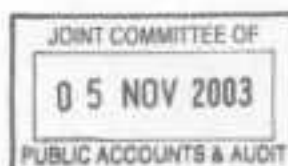


FOREIGN
AFFAIRS AND
TRADE

Diplomatic Security, Information
Management and Services Division

3 November 2003

The Hon Bob Charles MP
Chairman
Commonwealth Parliament Joint Committee
of Public Accounts and Audit
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600



Dear Mr Charles

Thank you for your letter of 16 September 2003 to the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade containing a request for information on computer-related security breaches. Dr Calvert has asked me to reply on his behalf.

The department has had no computer-related breaches of national security classified information or systems. In the period since 1998 a small amount of computer equipment has been reported stolen or lost (in the sense that it has not yet been accounted for in stocktake activity), but **none of this equipment carries national security classified information. None of the stolen or lost equipment represents a risk either to Government information or the integrity of the department's systems.**

By way of background, the department goes to considerable lengths to protect classified data and equipment. There are stringent policies in place governing the management and handling of information and the equipment from which classified information may be derived. Classified material cannot be prepared on laptop computers. Only a small number of laptops can connect to the secure system, and all of these have been accounted for. Desktops which connect to the secure system are 'thin client' terminals, which do not store national security classified information. The hard drives of servers are treated as safe hand material and all are accounted for. These policies have proven fully successful in preventing computer-related security breaches.

The department has not experienced any instances of stolen or lost software, unauthorised access to departmental systems or other significant events involving information technology security during the period. The department's systems are protected by a sophisticated firewall which detected and prevented just under a million attempted probes or attacks on the network between January and August 2003. It also repels thousands of viruses attacks each month.

The figures provided in the attachment cover the department and portfolio agencies. The equipment reported missing represents only a tiny proportion of the tens of thousands of pieces of information technology equipment held at or transiting between the department's offices and posts in Australia and overseas. We continually review the management of assets with a view to reducing further the numbers that cannot be accounted for. As the attached response to your request for information indicates, previous years' records of lost equipment have consistently been reduced following instances of equipment (or paperwork in connection with the destruction of equipment) coming to light in subsequent stock take activity.

Yours sincerely



Paul Tighe
First Assistant Secretary
Diplomatic Security, Information Management
and Services Division

Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

Request for Information

The following breaches provides information on the amount of computer equipment that has been reported stolen or has not been accounted for in stocktake activity. None of the stolen or lost equipment represents a risk to national security classified information or to the integrity of the department's systems.

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade:

1998/1999

No incidents recorded.

1999/2000

Losses of software

Nil.

Losses of hardware

22 laptop computers were not accounted for in stocktake activity during the year. All of these were accounted for in subsequent stocktakes.

37 desktop computers were not accounted for in stocktake activity during the year. All of these were accounted for in subsequent stocktakes.

Unauthorised access to computer systems

Nil.

Any other significant events involving information technology security

The Australian Federal Police (AFP) advised the department that two contract staff had received non-custodial sentences before the ACT Supreme Court for stealing computer related items from the department. The convictions followed a departmental report to the AFP in FY1997-98 regarding the theft of computer and related equipment. The AFP recovered two computers, a modem, monitor and associated peripherals from the offenders and returned them to the department.

2000/2001

Losses of software

Nil.

Losses of hardware

Six laptop computers were not accounted for in stocktake activity during the year. Three laptops were subsequently accounted for.
42 desktop computers were not accounted for in stocktake activity during the year. 25 were subsequently accounted for.

Unauthorised access to computer systems

Nil.

Any other significant events involving information technology security

Nil.

2001/2002

Losses of software

Nil.

Losses of hardware

1 laptop computer was not accounted for in stocktake activity.
3 laptop computers were reported stolen or suspected of having been stolen
2 desktop computers were reported stolen (in a single incident).
5 desktop computers were not accounted for in stocktake activity.
3 decommissioned File Servers relating to legacy systems were not accounted for in stocktake activity.
1 Rackmount Monitor was not accounted for in stocktake activity.

Results of investigations into these incidents

The two desktop thefts were the subject of an internal investigation. The internal investigation has concluded. Offenders were not apprehended and no items were recovered.

Unauthorised access to computer system

Nil.

Any other significant events involving information technology security

Nil.

2002/2003

Losses of software

Nil.

Losses of hardware

8 laptop computers were reported stolen or suspected of having been stolen.

1 desktop was reported stolen.

8 desktops were not accounted for in stocktake activity.

3 Thin Client Terminal Units (without hard drives) were not accounted for in stocktake activity.

9 decommissioned File Servers relating to legacy systems were not accounted for in stocktake activity.

4 Rackmount Monitors were not accounted for in stocktake activity.

Results of investigations into these incidents

The department undertook an internal investigation of one of these incidents. The police were requested to investigate the theft of three laptops and one desktop. We have had no further advice from police. Offenders were not apprehended and no items were recovered.

Unauthorised access to computer systems

Nil.

Any other significant events involving information technology security

Nil.

1 July 2003 to 10 October 2003

Losses of software

Nil.

Losses of hardware

There are no unaccounted for or stolen items of hardware.

Results of investigations into these incidents

Not applicable.

Unauthorised access to computer system

Nil.

Any other significant events involving information technology security

Nil.

AusAID:

1998/1999

No incidents recorded.

1999/2000

Losses of software

Nil.

Losses of hardware

Two laptops were stolen in separate incidents in Port Moresby. The laptops were not recovered.

Results of investigations into this incident

One theft was reported to the police. No further action was taken.

Unauthorised access to computer systems

Nil.

Any other significant events involving information technology security

Nil.

2000/2001

Losses of software

Nil.

Losses of hardware

One laptop stolen in Port Moresby.

Results of investigation into this incident

The theft was reported to the police. The laptop was not recovered and no further action was taken.

Unauthorised access to computer systems

Nil.

Any other significant events involving information technology security

Nil.

2001/2002

Losses of software

Nil.

Losses of hardware

Five laptops were stolen. Memory chips and hard drives from two computers were stolen in Harare.

Results of investigations into these incidents

Three thefts were reported to the police. None of the laptops were recovered and no further action was taken.

The theft of computer equipment in Harare was reported to police. One hard drive and one memory chip were recovered by police and a suspect was interviewed. Harare authorities have not advised the outcome of their investigation.

Unauthorised access to computer systems

Nil.

Any other significant events involving information technology security

Nil.

2002/2003

Losses of software

Nil.

Losses of hardware

One laptop was stolen.

Results of investigations into these incidents

The laptop was not recovered.

Unauthorised access to computer systems

Nil.

Any other significant events involving information technology security

Nil.

Austrade:

1998/1999:

Losses of software

Nil.

Losses of hardware

Three notebook computers were stolen.

Results of investigations into these incidents

All thefts were reported to the police. None of the notebooks were recovered and no further action has been taken.

Unauthorised access to computer systems

Nil.

Any other significant events involving information technology security

Nil.

1999/2000:

Losses of software

Nil.

Losses of hardware

Four notebook computers were stolen.

Results of investigations into these incidents

All thefts were reported to the police. None of the notebooks were recovered and no further action has been taken.

Unauthorised access to computer systems

Nil.

Any other significant events involving information technology security

Nil.

2000/2001:

Losses of software

Nil.

Losses of hardware

Five notebook computers were stolen.

Results of investigations into these incidents

All thefts were reported to the police. None of the notebooks were recovered and no further action has been taken.

Unauthorised access to computer systems

Nil.

Any other significant events involving information technology security

Nil.

2001/2002:

Losses of software

Nil.

Losses of hardware

Five notebook computers were stolen.

Results of investigations into these incidents

All thefts were reported to the police. None of the notebooks were recovered and no further action has been taken.

Unauthorised access to computer systems

Nil.

Any other significant events involving information technology security

Nil.

2002/2003:

Losses of software

Nil.

Losses of hardware

One notebook computer was lost; three notebook computers were stolen.

Results of investigations into these incidents

All thefts were reported to the police. None of the notebooks were recovered and no further action has been taken.

Unauthorised access to computer systems

Nil.

Any other significant events involving information technology security

Nil.

ACIAR:

1998/1999:

Losses of software

Nil.

Losses of hardware

One laptop stolen in transit.

Results of investigations into these incidents

The incident was reported to airline authorities. No further action was taken.

Unauthorised access to computer systems

Nil.

Any other significant events involving information technology security

Nil.

1999/2000:

No incidents recorded.

2000/2001:

Losses of software

Nil.

Losses of hardware

Five laptops were stolen, one in transit.

Results of investigations into these incidents

The thefts were reported to airline authorities and to the police respectively. The laptops were not recovered. No further action has been taken.

Unauthorised access to computer systems

Nil.

Any other significant events involving information technology security

Nil.

2001/2002:

No incidents recorded.

2002/2003:

No incidents recorded.

Export Finance and Insurance Corporation

1998/1999:

Losses of software

Nil.

Losses of hardware

Nil.

Results of investigations into these incidents

Not applicable.

2001/2002:

No incidents recorded.

2002/2003:

No incidents recorded.

Australia-Japan Foundation:

There have been no incidents of loss or theft of hardware or software, unauthorised access to systems or other significant events involving information technology security at the Australia-Japan Foundation during the reporting period.