

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S PORTFOLIO

Program: 1.7 National Security and Criminal Justice

Question No. SBE16/137

Senator Pratt asked the following question at the hearing on 12 December 2016:

Questions for the department:

1. There are concerns regarding the security of phones and other electronic devices of parliamentarians, bureaucrats and federal staff members travelling overseas. What is the nature and extent of these concerns?
2. Without wanting to draw attention to any nation, would travel to China, Hong Kong and Taiwan be considered a security risk?
3. How many cybersecurity incidents have the various security agencies responded to each year since January 2014?
4. In 2014 the then Assistant Minister for Defence the Member for Fadden travelled to China. Was the Department aware of Mr Robert's travel to China?
5. Did the Department provide Mr Robert with a secure phone for this trip?
6. Did the Department inspect or cleanse Mr Robert's electronic devices once he returned to Australia?
7. Did any incidents or attempted incidents of cybercrime occurred in relation to Mr Robert's trip? What about the loss of former Assistant Minister Member for Mayo's phone on a drunken night in Hong Kong in 2015?

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

1. This question is best directed to the Department of Defence, as the department responsible for the security of phones and other electronic devices for parliamentarians, bureaucrats and federal staff members travelling overseas.
2. This question is best directed to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, as the department responsible for providing travel advice and security risk assessments for travel to other nations.
3. Australia's Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT Australia), which sits within the Attorney-General's Department, responds to cyber security incidents affecting Australian business and industry. CERT Australia responded to 5869 incidents in 2014, 14401 in 2015, and 11260 in 2016. CERT Australia relies heavily on the voluntary self-reporting of cyber security incidents from a wide variety of sources throughout Australia and internationally and therefore does not have a complete view of incidents impacting Australian industry.

Questions on the number of cyber security incidents affecting government agencies that the Australian Signals Directorate has responded to since January 2014 are best directed to the Department of Defence.

4. No.
5. No. Questions about Mr Robert's travel security arrangements are best answered by the Department of Defence.
6. No. Questions about Mr Robert's travel security arrangements are best answered by the Department of Defence.
7. The Attorney-General's Department is not aware of any incidents that occurred during Mr Robert's trip.