

## **Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment**

### **QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016**

#### **Cross Portfolio**

**Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ16-000047**

**Senator Johnston asked on 11 February 2016 on proof Hansard page 28**

#### **Question**

##### **Unauthorised access to IT system**

Senator JOHNSTON: How many unauthorised accesses have you had and how many attacks have you suffered?

Mr Moore: I think I would have to take that question on notice. I should point out that the department and its gateway receives attacks continually.

Senator JOHNSTON: Just for the benefit of the committee, when you say 'continually', I do not think many people have a concept of what that really means. Can you put a bit of flesh on those bones for us?

Mr Moore: Any significant organisation, especially in the government, is a target. Typically, that can manifest itself in a few ways. One is through emails with malicious content.

Senator JOHNSTON: Malware, yes.

Mr Moore: Malware and so on—that is right, senator—and our various protections and firewalls and so on stop those. I have not checked the numbers recently—

Senator JOHNSTON: Several hundred a day?

Mr Moore: but it would be hundreds of thousands a month.

Senator JOHNSTON: Hundreds of thousands a month?

Mr Moore: Yes. The other way is that, because they are web based, our systems are potentially accessible on any device that has access to the internet, and people will try to exploit that. For instance, not our ESS system but our Australian JobSearch job board is always getting hit by people trying to inject code and get around the controls that are in that system to see whether they can access it or can access what is underneath. I do not have numbers—I could check that on notice—but it is very substantial.

#### **Answer**

There have been no confirmed cases of unauthorised access to Employment Services systems.

The number of identified attacks on Department of Employment web sites for the 12 month period to February 2015 was around 21,000.

Each month our spam filters block around 740,000 inbound emails with suspect content. Many of these emails contain malicious code or viruses.

In the month to 23 February 2016, there were over 90 million port scans targeting Shared Services Centre hosted IT systems (including Employment Services systems) that were blocked at the gateway. Port Scanning is one of the most popular techniques attackers use to discover services that they can exploit to break into systems.