

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

Program: Australian Federal Police

Question No. AE17/043

Senator Roberts asked the following question at the hearing on 28 February 2017:

1. Were any threats made against the Australian Christian Lobby in the year prior to the bombing? If yes, please advise details, including when these were reported to the AFP.
2. Was there any previous attack made against the ACL offices? If yes, please advise details, including when this was reported to the AFP.
3. Did any witnesses come forward and tell the AFP that on the night of the bombing they saw suspicious activity? If yes, please advise details of what they reported and what action was taken in regards to it.
4. Is there any evidence that a second person was involved? If so, please advise.
5. Was the individual who exploded the device an activist of any kind opposed to the ACL? If yes, please provide details, if no, please advise how this was established.
6. In the Commissioner's previous testimony to the committee, he claimed that that the bombing of the Australian Christian Lobby offices was not a terrorist attack by an opponent of traditional marriage, did not involve more than one person, nor was it motivated by any religious, political or other agenda but was instead a "suicide attempt." Please confirm that this is the story which you wish the committee to believe.
7. Please then advise how you managed to conclude that after a history of threats against ACL and a previous violent attack on the ACL by a gay marriage activist, you concluded that an individual hired a van at the airport, packed it full of gas cylinders, drove it across town late at night to the side street where the ACL offices were located, drove it into the building and blew it up, but this was simply a bizarre suicide attempt.
8. Has any ACT or Federal politician or a member of their staff sought to discourage the AFP from concluding that this was a terrorist attack by an activist opposed to the ACL and its advocacy of traditional marriage?

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

1. Yes. In the 12 months prior to the incident, there was one complaint of "using a carriage service to menace, harass or cause offence", involving a number of phone calls made to the Australian Christian Lobby in Canberra, reported to ACT Policing. This occurred in March 2016. This report was investigated by ACT Policing and Tasmania Police and finalised in May 2016. ACT Policing has not identified any link between this matter and the incident on 21 December 2016.
2. There have been no instances of attacks on ACL offices in Canberra reported to ACT Policing.
3. No
4. No
5. This matter is still subject to an ongoing investigation, however, on information available to date the answer is no.
6. The Honourable Senator is referred to Commissioner Colvin's testimony to the Committee on 28 February 2017.

7. The Honourable Senator is referred to Commissioner Colvin's testimony to the Committee on 28 February 2017 and the answers to questions 1, 2 and 5 above.

8. No.