

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING : 24 March 2017

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(AE17/290) - Taskforce Cadena - Programme 2.3: Visas

Senator Pratt, Louise (L&CA) written:

How many investigations are currently underway?

What is the budget of the Taskforce?

How many staff are there on the Taskforce?

How many successful prosecutions occurred since the last estimates?

Answer:

Investigations under the remit of Taskforce Cadena occur concurrently throughout the Department depending on the location of the allegation or identified offence.

There are currently nine (9) investigations in train across multiple states and territories. These investigations are at various stages of action ranging from the collection of intelligence and information, through to the submission of briefs of evidence to the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecution (CDPP) for consideration.

Exploitation of the visa programme is an Australian Border Force (ABF) Tier 1 priority. Activity under Taskforce Cadena contributes to this priority. There is no specific budget for Taskforce Cadena, and each participating agency contributes to the Taskforces from within existing budget allocation. The Department funds Taskforce Cadena activity through a range of capabilities, including investigators, field compliance activity and intelligence support. For example, in one recent operation, over 100 officers – across multiple agencies – were deployed on Cadena activity.

The Department currently has 8 FTE dedicated to Cadena investigations, with additional staff across the Department and ABF involved in Taskforce Cadena at any given time.

Where allegations are referred to other operational agencies, for example the Fair Work Ombudsman, the allegations are considered by existing operational staff. Operational agencies outside of the Department do not have a dedicated Taskforce Cadena footprint.

While no prosecutions have occurred since the previous estimates sitting, three (3) briefs of evidence have been submitted the CDPP for consideration, with an additional brief of evidence currently being finalised for submission.

Although migration related investigations are generally of a protracted nature, the submission of the above briefs is a significant step towards prosecuting suspects for this crime type.