

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

Group: 3

Program: Other Agency

Question No. BE15/096

Senator Collins asked the following written question from the 27 and 28 May 2015 hearing:

1. What role does the AFP play in protecting Australian national security and counter terrorism activities?
2. Have the national security and counter terrorism activities of the AFP increased over recent years?
3. Has the AFP benefited from the \$1.2 billion allocation of new funding for new counter terrorism efforts?
4. Will the AFP receive any portion of this \$1.2 billion which has been allocated to new counter terrorism efforts? Why not?
5. Given that Sixty-three extra Australian Federal Police members are working in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra on the foreign fighter threat and with Australia's other security agencies, they've arrested 22 people on seven counter-terrorism operations between September 2014 and April 2015, what impact will missing out on any additional funding have on these type of operations? (see appendix 2)
6. Will the AFP play a role in any of the new counter terrorism efforts that are funded through this \$1.2 billion boost?
7. How is giving Federal Justice Minister Keenan the new title of Counter Terrorism Minister meaningful when his frontline counter terrorism agency the Australian Federal Police has had its budget slashed?

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

1. In respect of national security, the Australian Federal Police (AFP) plays a critical role in the prevention, preparedness and response spaces, with prevention being the primary focus. Working in partnership with other government agencies, including the intelligence community and its state and territory counterparts, the AFP has specific responsibility to proactively and pre-emptively investigate allegations of terrorism offences both on and offshore with a view to preventing terrorist attacks.
2. The AFP continues to experience a significant rise in operational activity which can be directly attributed to the conflicts in Syria and Iraq. This level of activity is anticipated to continue as the number of Australians seeking to support conflict continues to grow. Of significant concern in the current operating environment is the increasing number of Australians who are travelling overseas to participate in the conflict or plan attacks onshore.
3. The AFP will benefit from the investment in strengthening the intelligence capabilities of partner agencies to challenge extremism.
4. No, because the AFP received additional national security funding of \$235.9m over four years announced at the 2015 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook to fund a range of counter

terrorism measures, upgrade security at Australian Parliament House and enhance Protective Security Arrangements.

5. As noted at question 4, the AFP received significant national security funding as part of the Government's 2015 MYEFO announcement. The AFP is committed to collaboration with partner agencies to provide high level operational responses to counter the threat posed by terrorists.
6. The AFP is committed to working with partner agencies in continuing to support the Government's national security and counter terrorism initiatives.
7. The AFP's budget has not been slashed. The variation in the AFP's overall budget over the forward estimates reflects ongoing efficiency requirements as well as the cessation of one-off 2014-15 measures such as the G20, Cricket World Cup and Asia Football Cup.