



**STATEMENT BY ROMAN QUAEDVLIEG APM  
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AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION SERVICE**

**Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee**

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Chair, Senators, it is a privilege to appear before you as Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service for the first time.

Since assuming the role of Deputy Chief Executive Office Border Enforcement last year, I have had the opportunity to travel broadly across the Service's operations and observe the passion and dedication of our officers to the critical tasks they perform in securing Australia's sovereignty, and contributing to our nation's prosperity.

A major priority for me, working with Secretary Pezzullo, is the integration of border protection services within the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, and the establishment of the Australian Border Force as announced by the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection earlier this year in May.

**Implementation of counter terrorism measures**

I would now like to update the Committee on Customs and Border Protection's activities in the counter-terrorism area and our ongoing reform milestones.

The Committee will be aware of the Government's announcement of \$154 million in additional funding to boost our counter-terrorism capacity. The measures will assist us as we seek to identify and stop Australians who seek to travel overseas to participate in terrorist activities, and to assist authorities in managing those seeking to return to Australia from foreign conflicts.

Engagement with the Islamic community has been a priority for the Service and for me personally.

I have met on a several occasions with Islamic community leaders in Sydney and Melbourne and our Regional Commanders across the country are continuing the process of sharing information and responding to concerns.

I have been heartened by the support and understanding shown by these community leaders, and their willingness to engage with Customs and Border Protection.

A priority for the Service has been the establishment of new Counter Terrorism Units at our international airports.

These teams were stood up in August.

The Government has also announced the deployment of next generation automated departures eGates at each of Australia's eight major international airports from mid-2015.

Linked with this expansion of our very successful SmartGate program, which has proven extremely popular with arriving travellers, the expansion of Advanced Passenger Processing to departing passengers will greatly improve our ability to verify identity prior to and on departure.

Contrary to popular belief, our officers do not currently have access to information about planned departures days in advance, and often are only aware of an individual's travel plans when they present at passport control for their outward journey. Advance Passenger Processing will change this at the time of check-in.

The increased use of automated processing at our airports will also free up our officers to focus on higher risk travellers, intelligence gathering, enforcement and targeting activity.

### **ACBPS reform and milestones**

While counter terrorism activities and co-operation with our domestic and international law enforcement partners to protect the community is a high priority at present, it is no more so than the ongoing work across the Service to deliver the major reform programme now well underway.

We are already seeing the creation of more integrated, effective and efficient border protection operations as we move away from the traditional divide between immigration and customs roles and function.

Since May's estimates hearing, we have:

- Launched our new operating model, and in doing so, stood up the Strategic Border Command, including five Regional Commands across the country.
- Established the Border Force as a vocation; a uniformed, disciplined arm within the existing workforce of the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service.
- Established the National Border Targeting Centre here in Canberra to co-ordinate the efforts of multiple national security, intelligence and law enforcement agencies to target high-risk cargo and passengers.
- Successfully trialled joint ACBPS and Departmental investigation and compliance operations in Western Australia.
- In mid-August we launched the interim Customs and Border Protection College. The college will form the basis for building a national standardised approach to training for the consolidated Department and that of the Australian Border Force.

In terms of preparing the current ACBPS officer cohort for transition to the ABF or broader department, I am pleased to report more than 90 per cent of ACBPS officers now have a career plan in place.

We also launched a recruitment campaign for the future Australian Border Force in September which I referenced earlier in my testimony and which I won't repeat here.

## **Update on integrity matters**

I would like to assure the Committee that I share the former CEO's unwavering focus on individual and organisational integrity.

There will be no let-up in our approach to ensuring we have the systems, processes and policies in place to deter, detect and respond to corruption and serious misconduct.

However, I also share the former CEO's belief that the vast majority of our officers are honest, diligent and hardworking.

It is the dedication and passion of our workforce in performing a vital public service—that of securing the nation's borders—that will be one of strongest foundations of our future success.

In relation to prosecution action against corrupt ACBPS officers, since August 2012:—

- Eight officers have been arrested or charged. Additionally, Code of Conduct inquiries have been instigated in relation to six officers.
- Of the 14 officers, 10 have resigned from the Service and one officer was terminated as a sanction for breaches of the Code of Conduct. A further officer remains suspended without pay pending his prosecution which is listed for trial in March 2015, and two officers were sanctioned after it was determined that they had breached the Code of Conduct.

- Of the eight arrested or charged, three former officers have been convicted. One was sentenced to seven years imprisonment. The second was sentenced to eight years, and the third was conditionally released and placed on a two year good behaviour bond.
- In addition, three former officers have been found guilty of perjury and sentenced to a range of offences.

In an appeal judgement handed down recently, the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions was successful in having the sentence for an individual who had attempted to bribe two Customs and Border Protection officers increased from 3 years 3 months with a 20 month non-parole period, to 5 years with a 3 year six month non-parole period.

This outcome sends a strong signal to those who would attempt to corrupt or coerce our officers that there are very serious consequences for doing so.

In closing it would be remiss of me not to mention with the Committee's indulgence some of the Service's performance highlights from the 13/14 FY which I was reviewing on the weekend:

- Processed almost 37 million inward and outward passengers
- Processed almost 54 000 international ships
- Inspected 1.6 million air cargo consignments
- Inspected 102 000 sea cargo containers
- Inspected 52 million mail items
- Detected 1737 firearms and firearm parts

- Detected 25000 individual detections of drugs with total 4.2 tonnes of major drugs including heroin, cocaine, MDMA, ATS, Precursors and Cannabis
- Surveilled over 151 million square nautical miles of ocean
- Collected almost \$14 billion in revenue

Thank you for the opportunity for making a statement. The Secretary would like to make a closing comment to that statement.