

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS  
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

**Question No. SBE15/082**

**Senator Rhiannon asked the following question at the hearing on 20 October 2015:**

1. Why was the Joint Police Taskforce into Industrial Criminality and Corruption established?
2. What is the relationship between the Taskforce and the Royal Commission into trade unions?
3. How does the AFP consider evidence given in a Royal Commission and what standing does the AFP consider this evidence to have relative to evidence in a court?
4. What was the relationship between the Taskforce and Royal Commission in the case of John Lomax?
5. Who initiated the charging of Lomax?
6. Please outline the entire process, from gathering evidence, arresting, charging, and eventual dismissal of that charge?
7. Was the case given standing in a court?

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

1. To investigate alleged criminal behaviour identified during the Royal Commission hearings of 2014 and to assist the Royal Commission with the investigation of corrupt behaviour of union officials.
2. On 2 January 2015, Joint Police Task Forces were established in Queensland, Victoria and NSW Victoria to support the work of the Royal Commission. The NSW Task Force was responsible for conducting criminal investigations in the ACT until March 2015, when a Task Force was established in the ACT. The Task Forces operate as joint police operational units in each of the States identified. They report through their senior officers to respective State/Territory Police commands. An AFP Commander oversees activity across all jurisdictional task forces and is responsible for facilitating dissemination of information from the task force to the Royal Commission, if and when appropriate. Assistance by the task force to the Royal Commission is facilitated by the AFP Commander in concert with counsel and solicitors assisting the Royal Commission.
3. Evidence adduced at the Royal Commission is not considered by the AFP unless a matter is referred for investigation. Any matters arising referred to the AFP are subject to normal police investigation processes and practices.
4. The Royal Commission had no input into either the investigation or charging of Mr Lomax.
5. Police officers in the ACT.
6. A brief of evidence was submitted in relation to this investigation and the matter was put before the courts. This matter was subsequently dismissed. Questions in relation to the hearing process should be referred to the ACT DPP.
7. Refer to answer in Question 6.