

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Additional Estimates

23 – 24 February 2011

Question No: AET 160

Topic: Collect on Victims of Crime

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Senator Ryan asked:

Senator RYAN—I want to turn to the data you collect on victims of crime. I understand you currently only collect data against individuals and households.

Mr Sutton—That is correct.

Senator RYAN—Have you considered collection of data around business victims of crime, whether that be white-collar crime or shoplifting? I am not aware of whether that has been done in the past.

Mr Sutton—I would have to come back to you on that. I am not sure how much work we have done on the business side of things. It is something we would be able to come back to you on and give you an idea—

Mr Harper—I am not aware of anything.

Mr Sutton—I am not aware of anything but rather than say we do not have something on it I would rather have a look and come back to you.

Senator RYAN—That would be great. And if you did have something I would appreciate a direction to it, because that way I can chase it up.

Mr Sutton—Sure.

Senator RYAN—Do you know whether the ABS has access to data from the states regarding crimes like shoplifting?

Mr Sutton—Yes we do. The state police provide us with information on crime statistics.

Senator RYAN—If it would be easy to collate that data with a new category of, say, crimes against business to add to the catalogue that has household crime and other crime, I would appreciate a reason as to why there might have been a decision to not do so—whether it is cost, data integrity issues or anything like that—so I can come back to you in May.

Mr Sutton—Absolutely, Senator. We will come back to you on notice with some information around that whole area.

Senator RYAN—Thank you.

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Answer:

The ABS currently receives limited data about business victims of selected crime types (including shoplifting) from state and territory police, but this data cannot reliably be separated in statistical output without further quality assurance.

There are a number of issues that the ABS would need to address prior to considering collecting and publishing more comprehensive data about business victims of crime:

- whether there is a sufficient stated need for the information, and what key questions the published statistics would need to answer;
- whether the required data is available and can be identified in police records;
- how the collection would be funded.

The ABS is also aware that a number of definitional issues would need to be addressed in order to progress any collection of this nature.