

SENATE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL LEGISLATION COMMITTEE
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Question No. 264

Senator Heffernan asked the following question at the hearing on 17 February 2006:

How does the new Memorandum of Cooperation between the AFP and DFAT, give the AFP a role in vetting the appointment of new Australian Ambassadors, High Commissioners and other diplomatic staff, prior to their appointment:

- (b) What concerns has the AFP raised since that agreement came into force?
- (c) What was the result of the AFP providing that adverse information in each case?

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

- (a) DFAT entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the former Australian Protective Service (APS) now integrated into the Australian Federal Police (AFP) in June 2002. This MOU expired on 30 June 2005, with DFAT exercising an option for its extension until 30 June 2006. Under the MOU, the AFP provides security clearance processing for DFAT contractors and non-ongoing employees in accordance with Part D of the *Commonwealth Protective Security Manual* (2005). These security clearances are performed on a commercial (fee for service) basis. The AFP in conducting security clearances for DFAT provides a written recommendation, for consideration by the delegate in DFAT, about whether to grant, deny, vary or withdraw a security clearance. The MOU does not provide for the conducting of security clearances for Australian Ambassadors, High Commissioners and other diplomatic staff, prior to their appointment, nor have any security clearances of this type been undertaken. Each file is returned to DFAT on completion of the relevant recommendation, with no copy being kept by the AFP.
- (b) N/A.
- (c) N/A.