

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE

Question No. 63

Senator Ludwig asked the following question at the hearing on 13 February 2007:

With regard to the Eurocopter-145 twin-engine helicopter that is due to commence patrol in April 2008, and the Eurocopter that will begin interim operation on May 2007:

- a) Are these helicopters in operation? If not:
 - i) Why not?
 - ii) When are they expected to be in operation?
- b) If so, when did they enter operation?
- c) Provide the costings for the purchase/lease and maintenance arrangements for that contract.
- d) Provide the final cost breakdown of the Eurocopter indicating yearly maintenance and running costs.
- e) Provide the total number of operational days the Eurocopter is targeted to make in 2006-07.

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

- a) These helicopters are not currently in operation.
 - i) A worldwide shortage has delayed the availability of the preferred helicopter for the Rapid Response role.
 - ii) A new EC-145 twin-engine aircraft will commence service in April 2008. As an interim service, the contractor will operate a BK-117 twin-engine aircraft from 1 May 2007. In the meantime Customs will continue to employ ad hoc charters to respond to any reports of onshore incursions.
- b) Not applicable.
- c) These costs are Commercial-in-Confidence
- d) These costs are Commercial-in-Confidence
- e) The Rapid Response Helicopter is available for use each day of the year and is contracted to provide up to 1250 hours per annum. On a pro-rata basis this equates to 208 hours for 2006-07, commencing on 1 May 2007.