

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS  
AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION SERVICE

**Question No. 2**

**Senator Xenophon asked the following question at the hearing on 12 February 2013:**

**Mr Pezzullo:** I have a higher level of confidence because there is a formal network that has been now set up between the various professional standards parts of the different law enforcement agencies that did not exist in mid-2009, and I have a very high level of assurance in relation to federal agencies because of the close relationship we have with the Federal Police professional standards and with ACLEI.

**Senator XENOPHON:** I understand that but, in reality, if someone has been caught for an offence of dishonesty or theft or fraud or drug use—or even trafficking, for that matter—the state police would normally be the first port of call.

**Mr Pezzullo:** In the first instance, that is right.

**Senator XENOPHON:** Can you, on notice, provide me with the details of those protocols?

**Mr Pezzullo:** Yes. ...

**Senator XENOPHON:** But is there any protocol in place? Is there a shared database with state police forces so that, if a Customs officer is picked up and they have not disclosed to the state police that they are a Customs officer, that would automatically be flagged? That seems to be a sure-fire—

**Mr Pezzullo:** I will wrap the response to that in the answer to the question I have taken on notice as to whether there are databases or IT based systems or whether there are—

**Senator XENOPHON:** But there is not one at the moment, is there?

**Mr Pezzullo:** I will check and I will come back in the question I have taken on notice.

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

If a Customs Officer is charged and/or arrested with an offence, at present there are no protocols or shared databases to guarantee that Customs and Border Protection will be automatically notified. The Integrity and Professional Standards Branch continues to work closely with other state and federal law enforcement agencies to improve the exchange of information relating to integrity issues. While there is no obligation for any law enforcement agency to report incidents or arrests to the Service, every effort is made to encourage these agencies to provide this type of information through participation at interagency forums and regular liaison meetings.

An arrested person is required to provide an arresting authority certain information to establish their identity and bona fides; this usually includes name, date of birth and address. The arrested person's occupation is not always included, especially for minor criminal matters that are dealt with by way of Court Attendance Notices or Infringement Notices.