

SENATE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL LEGISLATION COMMITTEE  
AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE

**Question No. 85**

**Senator Ludwig asked the Minister for Justice and Customs at the hearing on 24 May 2005:**

How many suspected illegal fishing vessels are sighted or suspected of being illegal fishing vessels that are simply reported but where there is no response taken, because they are outside of range, there is no vessel close by or weather precludes a response?

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

Coastwatch or RAAF aircraft report all suspected illegal activity to the National Surveillance Centre. Reports in relation to the sighting of vessels suspected of fishing illegally are provided to the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA).

AFMA will then make a determination as to whether a response is required. If a response is required then Coastwatch, on behalf of AFMA, may make a request for a response to either Defence or Customs or both where one agency is unable to meet the request.

A definitive figure for response rates cannot be provided as this information is operationally sensitive.