

SENATE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL LEGISLATION COMMITTEE  
AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE

**Question No. 202**

**Senator Ludwig asked the following question at the hearing on 24 May 2005:**

Improved Border Control in the Sulu and Celebes:

- a) Was this initiated at the request of the Indonesian government?
- b) What was the need for the deployment to this area?
- c) What sort of timeframe are we looking at in terms of the deployment to this area?
- d) Will the recent decision by the PNG Supreme Court to strip Australian police of immunity have any impact on the deployment (eg. were there going to be similar arrangements in place for ACS personnel)?
- e) Will any ACS personnel be posted to the Sulu and Celebes islands? If so how many, what will be their role?
- f) Could you provide a breakdown of the funding?
- g) Does it include funding for any infrastructure improvements at the ports?
- h) Who is paying for this? What sort of contribution are we getting from the Indonesians?
- I) What is the legal standing of the personnel involved? Is there an immunity deal offered to them?

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

- (a) No
- (b) Customs does not plan to deploy staff to the area. Customs staff may travel to the area on short assignments to deliver targeted training and other relevant assistance aimed at enhancing relationships and border controls.
- (c) Customs currently has no planned deployment to the area.
- (d) Events in PNG are unrelated to Customs' initiative in the Sulu and Celebes Seas area and no deployment is planned.
- (e) No, there is no intention to post Customs personnel to the Sulu and Celebes Seas area.
- (f) Approximately \$1m per year over four years (\$1.1m in first year)
  - i. \$0.38m in Staff costs and salaries
  - ii. \$0.2m Consultancy fees
  - iii. \$0.075m IT
  - iv. \$0.25m Travel expenses
  - v. \$0.09m Expenses related on-costs
  - vi. the additional \$0.1m in the first year is for capital – such as desks and computers.
- (g) The initiative does not provide infrastructure improvements at the ports beyond the potential provision of minor IT or communications equipment (phones, faxes or possibly radios).
- (h) Australia is funding the initiative. There is no Indonesian contribution.
- (i) Personnel will not be posted to the area [see 'e')]. Any Customs staff travelling for short-term assignments will do so in their official capacities.