

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Question No. 58

Senator Xenophon asked the following question at the hearing on 26 May 2009:

In relation to the Government Response to the Wheeler Review on Aviation Security;

- a) provide details on the recommendations, relating to the AFP, that have been implemented, and
- b) provide a copy of the Government Response.

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

a) The Wheeler Review made seventeen recommendations of which the Australian Federal Police (AFP) was given specific responsibility for implementing recommendation six. Recommendation six required the development of a Unified Policing Model (UPM) at Australia's eleven major airports.

The AFP has fully implemented the UPM which includes:

- Airport Police Commanders;
- Airport Uniform Police;
- Counter Terrorist First Response;
- Joint Airport Investigation Teams;
- Joint Airport Intelligence Group;
- Police Aviation Liaison Officers; and
- Regional Rapid Deployment Teams.

In December 2008, the Council of Australian Governments reviewed the UPM and reconfirmed its commitment to the model.

b) The Government Response was coordinated by the then Department of Transport and Regional Services and is a classified document. The Prime Minister issued the attached media release dated 21 September 2005 and the Council of Australian Governments issued the attached communiqué dated 27 September 2005 describing the measures the Government would take in response to the Wheeler Review.

PRIME MINISTER

SECURING AND POLICING AUSTRALIA'S AIRPORTS

Today I am pleased to announce new measures to further tighten security at Australia's major airports, providing additional Australian Government expenditure of almost \$200 million.

In this context, I am also releasing the report of Sir John Wheeler on airport security and policing arrangements.

Sir John has provided the Government with a comprehensive and detailed report that takes a fresh and independent look at our airport security and policing arrangements.

Overall the report makes a positive assessment of Australia's airport security policy settings. The report notes the significant resources provided by the Australian Government to combat terrorism in response to the post-11 September security environment.

However, the report does identify some areas where airport security could be improved, including policing arrangements at major airports, to better combat criminal and terrorist activity.

The Government has considered the recommendations of the report and accepts the thrust of all the recommendations.

While the initiatives announced today address the issues raised in Sir John's report a number were already underway as the review was being conducted.

A key recommendation of the report was for the appointment of Airport Police Commanders and the integration of Commonwealth and State policing at all major Australian airports.

Implementation of these recommendations in particular will require close cooperation with State and Territory governments. Accordingly, I will be seeking the agreement of States and Territories at the special Council of Australian Governments (COAG) meeting on counter-terrorism on 27 September to work cooperatively to implement the recommendations of the report.

Specifically, I will request agreement from States and Territories to provide trained police officers to support a new Airport Police Commander structure at all airports with a counter-terrorism first response presence.

Funding and coordination arrangements for this policing function will be discussed at the COAG meeting but the Australian Government stands ready to make a significant financial contribution to do its part to ensure this important role is filled.

The new initiatives I announce today include:

- \$40.9 million for the establishment of five new Joint Airport Investigation Teams at Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth airports to address serious and organised crime (includes AFP \$36.5 million and Customs \$4.4 million);
- \$48.7 million for increased air-side Customs border patrols at Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth, Darwin and Cairns airports to provide a more visible presence to deter and respond to criminal activity;
- \$19.8 million to further upgrade the Customs closed circuit television (CCTV) capabilities, including assistance for airport operators and additional cameras at major airports;
- a \$38.0 million dollar package to strengthen air cargo security arrangements, including the introduction of improved technology for the detection of explosives;
- \$43.9 million for improved security and crime information exchange arrangements for aviation (includes \$20.5 million for the Australian Crime Commission and \$23.4 million for the Department of Transport and Regional Services);
- an immediate review of the *Aviation Transport Security Act 2004* and associated regulations;
- the further tightening of background checking and processing arrangements for the issue of Aviation Security Identification Cards; and
- \$3.8 million to introduce a new national aviation security training framework to support the aviation industry.

Governments cannot afford to be complacent about security. While these measures are only a small part of our overall response to the current security environment, they are a comprehensive response to the issues raised in Sir John's report and will significantly strengthen our aviation security arrangements. I look forward to the support of State and Territory governments in implementing them.

I would like to thank Sir John and his team for their important contribution to helping make our airports safer.

A copy of the report can be downloaded from – <http://www.aspr.gov.au>

* Details of the proposals are attached

21 September 2005

Aviation Security Strengthened

1. Integrated major airport policing model

Working with airport operators and other government agencies, Australian Federal Police (AFP) Airport Police Commanders will manage an integrated and coordinated approach to general policing, counter terrorism first response and intelligence at major Australian airports. This will ensure that all aspects of policing are addressed through a coordinated control system that complements all other law enforcement and security activities.

2. New Airport Investigations Teams - \$40.9 million

Joint Airport Investigation Teams will be established at Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth airports to address serious and organised criminality at large airports. The teams will be deployed to undertake investigations as required at counter-terrorism first response (CTFR) airports. The teams will focus on detecting, interdicting and prosecuting serious criminal activity and will comprise AFP and Customs officers, with state and territory police and other agencies called upon as needed. The teams will be supported by a dedicated surveillance capability.

3. Increased air-side Customs border patrols - \$48.7 million

Customs border patrol capabilities will be strengthened to enhance the integrity of the Australian border in the air-side environment and to provide a more visible law enforcement presence to deter criminal activity. An additional 107 Customs officers will be deployed across Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth, Darwin and Cairns airports. Customs air border patrol officers are responsible for maintaining border controls in and around international aircraft and airport terminals, including in baggage handling areas.

4. Upgrade to Custom's CCTV capabilities - \$19.8 million

The Government recognises the value of integrated CCTV systems and agrees that highlighted issues in airports should be addressed immediately. As recommended by the Review, Customs will be taking a lead role to assist airports, airlines and other affected organisations improve integration of their existing CCTV systems.

Customs CCTV capability will be increased and upgraded to digital recording with over 200 new cameras in basement, baggage and tarmac areas (\$13.9 million). This added CCTV capability will assist in the prevention, identification and prosecution of illegal activity at Australia's international airports. Customs will also take a lead role in expanding and improving the CCTV systems at Australian airports (\$5.9 million).

5. Air cargo security package - \$38.0 million

The Government, in partnership with industry, will implement new measures to further strengthen air cargo security through a \$38.0 million package of initiatives. These include increased levels of compliance auditing of air cargo security clearance procedures, a staged introduction of technology to strengthen explosive detection capability, and new training and communication activities to strengthen security awareness and procedures in the air cargo industry.

This funding will be allocated to the Department of Transport and Regional Services and to the Australian Customs Service. Extensive consultation will be undertaken with industry to identify where security outcomes can be improved and continue to enhance Australia's exports and domestic air cargo transport.

6. Review of aviation legislation and regulations

The Government will continue to review security legislation to ensure it remains current with the security environment. As part of this an on-going review, consultations with industry on improved processes has commenced at all levels, from the largest to the smallest aviation operations.

7. New Aviation Security Identification Cards arrangements

The Government is considering options to strengthen the background checking criteria for Aviation Security Identification Cards (ASIC). Reforming of the process for obtaining an ASIC is also being considered with a view to simplifying and consolidating arrangements.

8. Strengthening of airport security committee membership

Airport Security Committees will be strengthened and refocussed to improve their ability to reacting quickly and effectively to security threats at airports. The participation of senior decision makers, with the authority to take appropriate action to security threats, will be increased. Existing airport security committees will become “Airport Security Consultative Groups” and perform the function of information sharing and identifying any key issues to bring forward to the newly restructured Airport Security Committees.

9. Review of criteria to establish counter terrorism first response airports.

The Government will review the criteria for the provision of counter-terrorism first response functions at major airports. This will include establishing a set of defined criteria which are responsive to changes over time. A review of an airport’s CTFR designation will be conducted every three years.

10. Improved national aviation security and crime information exchange arrangements - \$43.9 million

ASIO will issue updates on the terrorist threat to aviation on a quarterly basis and review the sectoral assessment of the threat to Australia’s aviation interests and associated threat levels every two years. The Australian Crime Commission (ACC) will establish a new unit dedicated to providing regular criminal intelligence assessments for the aviation sector. Department of Transport and Regional Services (DOTARS) will enhance its capacity to draw on ASIO threat assessments and ACC criminal threat assessments to more regularly disseminate operational and policy focused transport security threat and protective security information to industry.

11. National aviation security training framework - \$3.8 million

The Government has committed \$3.8 million to develop a nationally consistent transport security training framework including nationally accredited training modules for the aviation industry. This will include:

- training modules for the aviation industry in areas such as security planning, risk assessments, protective security principles, the operational security environment and national counter-terrorism arrangements;
- arrangements for the aviation sector to engage assistance to target their greatest risks, vulnerabilities or consequences; and
- flexible delivery options, with a particular focus on regional and smaller airports.

The transport sector, especially regional and small airports, will benefit from employees being able to develop nationally recognised skills and qualifications related to transport security. This will provide operators with competent staff that support the effective and secure operation of transport services to the public.

Council of Australian Governments' Special Meeting on Counter-Terrorism 27 September 2005

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG), comprising the Prime Minister, Premiers, the Chief Ministers of the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory and the President of the Australian Local Government Association, held a special meeting in Canberra today to consider Australia's national counter-terrorism arrangements.

This Communiqué sets out the agreed outcomes of the discussions.

WHEELER REPORT ON AVIATION SECURITY AND POLICING AT AUSTRALIAN AIRPORTS

COAG strongly supported the findings in the Wheeler Report, particularly a single command structure at Australian airports.

COAG agreed:

to establish a unified policing model at each of the 11 counter-terrorism first response (CTFR) airports including: an Airport Police Commander, a dedicated Joint Intelligence Group, a CTFR capability and a permanent community policing presence, and at each of the five major international airports (Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide), a Joint Airport Investigation Team;

that the Commonwealth will fund under the unified model a full-time community policing presence of Australian Federal Police (AFP) officers wearing AFP uniforms under AFP command, at all 11 CTFR airports;

that recruitment and selection of the Airport Police Commander will be undertaken by a panel which will include both Commonwealth and State or Territory representation;

that the arrangements for the secondment or recruitment of State and Territory police to the AFP command will be finalised by the NCTC in consultation with Police Commissioners as soon as practicable;

to conduct via the NCTC a review of information and intelligence-sharing processes between Commonwealth and State and Territory agencies to facilitate better information flow to counter crime and terrorism in the aviation sector and to report back to COAG by mid 2006; and

that the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet would lead an NCTC working group comprising relevant Commonwealth, State and Territory agencies to prepare a report on possible further refinements to terrorist incident response and crisis management arrangements at CTFR airports and report back to COAG by mid 2006.