

SENATE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL LEGISLATION COMMITTEE
AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF CRIMINOLOGY

Question No. 336

Senator Ludwig asked the following question on 2 December 2004:

- a) How many calls has the telephone hotline received?
- b) How much information has been gathered from the telephone hotline?
- c) What manner of information has been gathered from the telephone hotline?
- d) How verifiable and sound is the information gathered from the telephone hotline?
- e) How many nuisance calls have been received on the telephone hotline?
- a) How much did it cost to establish the telephone hotline?

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

- a) The telephone hotline received 201 calls.
- b) A considerable amount of information about the circumstances in which drink spiking incidents can occur was collected from the hotline.
- c) Information was collected about when the incident occurred, location, sex of victim, circumstances surrounding the incident, whether the victim could identify the offender, associated victimisation, reporting of the incident, and after effects.
- d) As victims were self-selected (they chose to call into the hotline) and were anonymous, it is not possible to verify the information which they provided. However no calls were deemed by the interviewers as sounding 'suspicious' and the report makes clear that verification of drink spiking is at the best of times extremely difficult.
- e) No nuisance calls were identified.
- f) \$21,773.50

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Senator Ludwig asked the following question on 2 December 2004:

- a) Was an external company contracted to provide the telephone hotline?
- b) If so, was there a tender process for their selection?

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

- a) During business hours the telephone hotline was manned by AIC staff. Outside of business hours the operation of the hotline was sub-contracted to a local social research company, Datacol, located in Canberra.
- b) The total cost for the sub-contracted part of the hotline was \$5,600. There was no tender process for this as (i) it was necessary for the sub-contractor to be located in Canberra so that face-to-face liaison throughout the hotline was possible, and (ii) the sub-contractor has worked with the AIC before and could be relied upon to provide quality interviewers for the duration of the research.

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Regarding the work done on victimisation of older Australians, what sort of information was gathered from older Australians and how was it gathered?

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

The aim of this project was to obtain a fuller picture of the extent to which current policies, services and programmes are providing the opportunity for older Australians to live a safe and confident life in our communities. The research was conducted in two stages.

The aim of Stage 1 of the research was to catalogue crime prevention programmes for older people in all jurisdictions in Australia. To achieve this, a questionnaire was developed and sent to:

- All Commonwealth, state and territory government agencies with responsibility for older people;
- All local government agencies;
- State and Territory police;
- Older people's organisations (such as the Council on the Ageing, the National Seniors' Association and the Australian Pensioners and Superannuants Association), and
- Community organisations (such as the Salvation Army, Apex and Lions Clubs).

Stage 2 included consultations with focus groups held in Perth, Townsville and Canberra.

In Perth, two focus groups were organised through the Office for Seniors' Interest.

In Townsville, two focus groups were organised. The first was with the Townsville Regional Committee on the Ageing and the second was with the local Senior Citizen's Association.

In Canberra, the focus groups were arranged through the Council on the Ageing.