

SENATE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL LEGISLATION COMMITTEE
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Question No. 224

Senator Stott Despoja asked the following question at the hearing on 31 October 2005:

In presenting the *Law and Justice Legislation Amendment (Serious Drug Offences And Other Measures) Bill* 2005, the Attorney-General stated that its prime object was “to reduce the supply of illicit drugs”.¹ Without accurate indicators of the size of the various drug markets, how is it possible to show that the level of drugs seized reduces the supply of drugs available in Australia’s drug markets?

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

In estimating what is, by definition, an illegal and covert market, price and purity are both accepted measures of the availability of illicit drugs on the streets. A recent joint study between the Australian National University and the AFP demonstrated for the first time the connection between the number and size of drug seizures and drug availability. This research has been described as groundbreaking by many commentators including the Editor in Chief of the international journal *Addiction* who described the study as being of relevance to drug policy makers world wide. A report of the study is due to be published in an upcoming edition of *Addiction*.

¹Attorney-General second reading speech of the *Law and Justice Legislation Amendment (Serious Drug Offences And Other Measures) Bill* 2005.