

SENATE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL LEGISLATION COMMITTEE
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Question No. 276

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

- a) Regarding the people smuggling strike team:
- (i) How many officers are currently on the strike team?
 - (ii) How many other personnel are currently under the strike team?
 - (iii) Where are they located?
 - (iv) Have there been any fluctuations in the numbers of people assigned to the strike team over the last 3 years?
- b) What coordination does the strike team have with Coastwatch?
- (i) Does it include sharing personnel, resources, etc.?
 - (ii) Are there joint settings of priorities?
- c) What information does the AFP provide to Coastwatch regarding the entry of vessels?
- d) What information does Coastwatch provide to the AFP regarding the entry of vessels?
- e) Are any officers seconded to Coastwatch or does Coastwatch have any members on this team?
- (i) If so, how many, how long, when did they first join the team?
 - (ii) If not why not?

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

- a)
- (i) 13. Additional staff are deployed on a needs basis to assist in people smuggling investigations.
 - (ii) 3 Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs staff.
 - (iii) Canberra and deployed on a needs basis.
 - (iv) Yes.
- b) The People Smuggling Strike Team (PSST) maintains close coordination with Coastwatch through a number of forums, including the People Smuggling Task Force High Level Group, the Operations and Program Advisory Committee, and the Analyst Exchange Group.
- (i) No.
 - (ii) Joint Priorities are set at the High Level Group, with reference to the available intelligence and threat assessments.
- c) From 1 January to 31 October 2005, 59 intelligence reports were disseminated by the AFP to nine key stakeholder agencies, including Coastwatch. These reports are based on information obtained through AFP sources, and have covered the activities of major people smuggling organisers in Indonesia, Thailand and elsewhere.

- d) Coastwatch provides the AFP with detailed information relating to the entry of vessels through the High Level Group, and through regular intelligence exchange.
- e) No and no.
 - (i) Not applicable.
 - (ii) The PSST communicates with Coastwatch in an effective manner in relation to the detection and investigation of organised transnational crime groups involved in people smuggling to Australia. There has been no identified need to exchange officers between the organisations.