

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

Output 2.4

Question No. 74

Senator Ludwig asked the following question at the hearing on 31 October 2006:

With reference to pages 19-20 of the Annual report and regarding the National Spatial Information for National Security:

- (a) Please outline the program and its uses?
- (b) What is the total projected spending on this project by year?
- (c) How much has been spent to date?
- (d) Is it complete? If not, what is the projected completion date?
- (e) Why is this task performed here and not by the Critical Infrastructure Group?

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

(a) The National Counter Terrorism Committee (NCTC), at its meeting in December 2004, agreed to the formation of the National Spatial Information for National Security (NSINS) working group. The NSINS working group is a consultative mechanism, with representatives from the States and Territories, a number of Commonwealth agencies and the Australian Local Government Association.

The NSINS working group is tasked to consider and facilitate the use of geospatial information in support of counter terrorism, critical infrastructure protection and emergency management across, within and between states, territories, local government and the Australian Government. The NSINS working group has recently developed a strategic plan to provide direction on the development and delivery of a national spatial information capability by 2010.

(b) The meeting and associated costs of the NSINS working group are met from the NCTC budget allocation. NSINS seeks NCTC funding on an as required basis.

(c) From its inception in early 2005 to October 2006, expenditure on NSINS has been approximately \$150,000.

(d) No. The NSINS working group was not established with a timeline for completion of its role. The NSINS working group will play a leading role in the ongoing development and management of an implementation strategy for the national spatial information capability between now and 2010.

(e) The NSINS working group has an "all hazards" focus with engagement in the three key arenas: counter-terrorism, critical infrastructure protection and emergency management. In addition to reporting directly to the NCTC, NSINS provides regular update reporting to the Australian Emergency Management Committee and the Critical Infrastructure Advisory Council. The NCTC tasked the Protective Security Coordination Centre within The Attorney-General's Department to chair NSINS and provide ongoing secretariat and policy support to the working group.