

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS  
AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE

**Question No. 109**

**Senator Abetz asked the following question at the hearing on 20 October 2008:**

In relation to coastal surveillance operated by Border Protection Command:

- a) provide the total number of hours flown from 1 January 2008 to 30 September 2008, and
- b) provide the aerial surveillance coverage, in terms of square nautical miles, undertaken between 1 January 2008 and 30 September 2008.

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

- c) Border Protection Command aircraft flew a total of 11,577 hours in the high threat areas to Australia's north from 1 January to 30 September 2008. However, as advised in response to Question on Notice No. 55 arising from the Budget Estimates Hearings in May 2008, Customs ceased using flying hours as a measure of surveillance coverage in 2006-07 as aerial surveillance coverage in terms of square nautical miles (nm<sup>2</sup>) is the effective surveillance measure.
- d) Between 1 January 2008 and 30 September 2008, aerial surveillance coverage of the high threat areas of Australia's northern waters was 75 million nm<sup>2</sup>. As previously advised to the Committee, a new more accurate method of calculation was introduced from 1 January 2008. As explained on page 43 of the Australian Customs Service Annual Report 2007-2008, the former method produced larger square nautical mile coverage figures.