

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Question No. 91

Senator Ludlam asked the following question in writing, following the hearing on 19 October 2009:

In relation to cyber crime;

- a) how many devoted high-tech investigators did the AFP have at June 30 2009 working on infiltrating cyber crime networks or apprehending cyber criminals,
- b) is there a breakdown in how their time is spent on areas including child grooming, phishing, muling, financial crime and file sharing and copyright infringement,
- c) how many arrests were initiated by these federal agents in each of these areas in the last financial year,
- d) does the AFP have targets for the number of dedicated investigative staff within the high-tech crime area for the current financial year, and
- e) does the AFP have estimates on the cost borne by the Australian public as a result of high-tech crime?

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

a) As at 30 June 2009, the Australian Federal Police (AFP) had 256 members attached to High Tech Crime Operations (HTCO), comprising investigators and operational/technical support staff. The AFP employs a diverse workforce which allows resources to be drawn from across the organisation to combat cyber crime.

b) It is not possible to accurately state the number of hours directly attributed to the specific crimes mentioned.

However, during 2008/09 a total of 329,217 hours were attributed by HTCO in support of AFP investigations.

c) For the 2008-09 financial year, the AFP made 231 arrests for online child exploitation and child sex tourism offences. It is not possible to accurately state the number of arrests relating to the other specific crimes mentioned.

d) HTCO is an integration of technicians, close support staff and investigators which ensures the AFP is able to develop a highly skilled workforce that is technology savvy. The reliance on investigative staff is part of the full scope of the portfolio.

e) No. The AFP relies upon sourced information compiled by reputable industry agencies such as the Australian Institute of Criminology¹ and the Australian Bureau of Statistics².

¹ Australian Institute of Criminology, June 2009, Industry sector and the prevalence of computer security incidents against Australian businesses - <http://www.aic.gov.au/en/publications/current%20series/cfi/181-200/cfi192.aspx>

² ABS 2007 Fraud Survey catalogue number 4528.0