

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION SERVICE

Question No. 140

Senator Humphries asked the following question at the hearing on 16 October 2012.

Aerial surveillance

- 1) How many planes are currently used by BPC? Where are they located and how many flying hours are they each allocated?
- 2) Have any aircraft required repairs or additional maintenance? If yes, list the repairs and maintenance undertaken.

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

- 1) Border Protection Command (BPC) is assigned air assets from both Customs and Border Protection and the Australian Defence Force.

Defence assigns three maritime patrol aircraft, which are most often located in Darwin, to BPC. These aircraft have been allocated a combined total of 2200 flying hours for the 2012-13 financial year for tasking against the eight threats.

Fourteen Customs and Border Protection aircraft are available for tasking by BPC. Ten Bombardier Dash 8 maritime surveillance aircraft are located in Cairns, Darwin and Broome with regular deployments to Horn Island and Christmas Island. Two Reims F406 aircraft operate from Cairns and Horn Island. Two helicopters are based at Horn Island.

The Dash 8 aircraft are contracted to fly a maximum of 15,000 flying hours on maritime surveillance missions with a surge capacity of a further 250 hours. The Reims are contracted to a maximum of 2,000 hours for 2012-13. The helicopters are contracted to a maximum of 1,250 hours per year.

- (2) Aircraft assigned to BPC, like all aircraft, require regular and scheduled routine maintenance. The following unscheduled major repairs have been undertaken on Defence maritime patrol aircraft assigned to BPC since July 2011:

2011-12 financial year

Unscheduled major repairs

- nine engine changes
- 14 propeller removals and installations
- two windscreen changes

2012-13 financial year (first quarter)

Unscheduled major repairs

- one engine change
- five propeller removals and installations