

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

Question No. 18

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

Senator HUMPHRIES: That is all I wanted to ask about the boats you are using. I had a question about the purchase of shredders for Mr Pezzullo. I understand from a question that was taken on notice by you at the last estimates that the Customs and Border Protection Service has purchased 118 new shredders in the last 12 months, apparently at a cost of approximately \$5,373 each. That is almost two-thirds of a million dollars spent on shredders. Without being cynical, what possible use could Customs and Border Protection have for that many brand new shredders?

...

As Customs and Border Protection in the last four or five years has come into the high end of the intelligence community, the national security community and some of the more sensitive law enforcement work we are now involved in, the classification of documents has increased. They have to be disposed of through approved means, and sometimes that includes, after appropriate registration for archives purposes, the destruction of documents through industrial strength or appropriate strength shredders. Whether that explains the totality of that purchase or whether it is a sub-element I will have to clarify.

Senator HUMPHRIES: I am puzzled because the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, which presumably has at least the same level of requirement to shred documents securely, has been able to purchase shredders ranging in cost from as low as \$353. I do not know whether you have different classifications of shredder depending on the confidentiality of the document.

Mr Pezzullo: I will have to take the per-unit issue on notice.

...

Senator HUMPHRIES: You have 250 shredders in your organisation according to this answer that you provided. In how many physical locations does the Customs and Border Protection Service have offices where you would need a shredder? Presumably you do not have shredders on boats and things like that—you would have them in offices somewhere.

Mr Pezzullo: I would not jump to any conclusions about where the shredders are. Some of them might well be in field locations, although I suspect they would tend to be in office locations. Our principal national headquarters is in Canberra, and that is where most of the highly secure documentation I described earlier is held. As to where these shredders are located and how many are in Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne or in regional offices et cetera, I will have to take that on notice.

Senator HUMPHRIES: But how many offices do you have? How many offices does the service have around the country?

Mr Pezzullo: Each capital city has an office. There is the national headquarters in Sydney and then there are 29 regional and district offices outside of the main capitals. There are the capital cities, in each of which there is normally a Customs house where the regional staff work. Then there are locations such as airports, seaports and the mail centres where our deployed staff are, and then there are 29 district offices outside those capital cities and large urban locations.

Senator HUMPHRIES: It sounds like you have got multiple shredders in most or a large number of those locations.

Mr Pezzullo: I do not know where they are. I would have to take that on notice.

Senator HUMPHRIES: Okay.

...

Senator HUMPHRIES: Could you please take on notice to tell us where each of those 250 shredders are.

Mr Pezzullo: Yes.

Senator HUMPHRIES: I do not need to know what floor and building they are in. If there are five in the Sydney office, just say five in Sydney.

Mr Pezzullo: We will provide what we can.

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

In 2011/12, the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service conducted an audit of the shredders used throughout the agency to ensure compliance with the *Australian Government Protective Security Policy Framework* (PSPF) introduced in 2010. This audit identified that of the 250 shredders in operation within the agency at the time, 118 were either nearing the end of their service life or would not meet PSPF standards.

The shredders purchased by the agency to replace these units are rated to destroy Top Secret level classified documents, reflecting the increasing role played by Customs and Border Protection in the national security community of agencies. The agency requires this quantity of shredders due to our geographic dispersion throughout Australia. This includes a presence in each State and Territory capital, international airports and seaports, international mail and cargo handling facilities and 29 District Offices. Larger offices require multiple units, as a single shredder in these locations would be highly inefficient in terms of staff time.

As well as meeting PSPF requirements, the purchase of the shredders achieved value for money, financial efficiencies and economies of scale outcomes. The cost of shredders was more than offset by savings generated from ceasing a contract for secure destruction of classified waste. The contract cost to Customs and Border Protection for classified waste bins was approximately \$3350 per work area, per annum. By contrast, each new shredder had an approximate cost of \$5373 and a projected life span of 10 years. The one off cost of shredders provides a greater benefit than the ongoing destruction methods previously in place. This cost is not significantly higher than the average cost of the shredders purchased by ASIO at \$4659, as outlined in that agency's response to Question on Notice 164 from Budget Estimates in May 2012.

The Australian Customs and Border Protection Service now has a total of 234 paper shredders which comply with PSPF. There are an additional 16 shredders which are used for destruction of other matter such as compact discs.

The location of the paper shredders are as follows:

Physical Location	State / Territory	Purchased in 2011/12	Existing
Collie Street Fyshwick	ACT	1	
Canberra Customs House	ACT	18	6
Canberra Allara House	ACT	7	4
Canberra Training Facility	ACT		1
Records Management Mitchell	ACT		1
Canberra 2 Constitution Ave	ACT	15	6
Sydney Container Examination Facility	NSW	2	3
Sydney Training Facility	NSW	2	
Sydney Customs House	NSW	7	7
Sydney Detector Dog Unit (DDU)	NSW		1

Wollongong District Office	NSW		1
Eden District Office	NSW		1
Coffs Harbour District Office	NSW		1
Newcastle District Office	NSW		1
Newcastle Container Examination Facility	NSW		1
Richmond RAAF Base	NSW		1
Darwin Customs House	NT	4	4
Darwin Container Examination Facility	NT	1	
Gove District Office	NT		1
Darwin Airport	NT	2	1
International Mail Brisbane	QLD	1	1
Brisbane DDU	QLD		2
Brisbane Customs House	QLD	2	10
Cairns District Office	QLD	1	3
Brisbane Container Examination Facility	QLD		4
Brisbane International Airport	QLD	3	1
National Uniform Store	QLD	1	
Bowen District Office	QLD		1
	State / Territory	Purchased in 2011/12	Existing
Mackay District Office	QLD		2
Weipa District Office	QLD		1
Bundaberg District Office	QLD		1
Thursday Island District Office	QLD	2	1
Gladstone District Office	QLD	1	1
Cairns International Airport	QLD	1	
Townsville District Office	QLD		1
Townsville International Airport	QLD		1
Gold Coast International Airport	QLD	1	3
Adelaide International Airport	SA	1	2
Adelaide Container Examination Facility	SA	2	2
Adelaide Customs House	SA	6	4
Adelaide Air Cargo	SA	1	
Port Lincoln District Office	SA	1	

Port Pirie District Office	SA	1	
Hobart Customs House	TAS	2	
Burnie District Office	TAS	1	
Launceston District Office	TAS	1	
Melbourne International Mail	VIC	2	1
Melbourne International Airport	VIC	4	4
Melbourne Customs House	VIC	6	7
Melbourne Airport Customs House	VIC	4	2
Melbourne DDU	VIC	2	
Melbourne Container Examination Facility	VIC		2
Geelong District Office	VIC		1
Portland District Office	VIC		1
Fremantle Customs House	WA	5	4
Fremantle Container Examination Facility	WA	1	
Perth Customs House	WA	1	
Perth Post	WA		1
Perth International Airport	WA		4
Port Hedland District Office	WA	1	
Esperance District Office	WA		1
Physical Location	State / Territory	Purchased in 2011/12	Existing
Bunbury District Office	WA		1
Albany District Office	WA		1
Carnarvon District Office	WA		1
Christmas Island District Office	WA		1
Geraldton District Office	WA	1	1
Broome District Office	WA	1	1
Fremantle Ship Project Facility	WA	1	
Dampier District Office	WA	1	
		118	116
	Total		234