

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Question No. 163

Senator Ludwig asked the following question at the hearing on 18 November 2013:

1. I refer to the coalition's policy to install local anti-gang squads. Can I get an update on the implementation of that policy please?
2. Who will administer these 'local anti-gang' squads?
3. What percentage of AFP resources will be used for these squads?
4. What is the difference between a taskforce and a squad?
5. Could the AFP have moved resources to areas under the anti-gang taskforce?
6. What duplication will be involved in anti-gang squads?
7. What difficulties to the chain of command will the squads present?
8. What towns will have a squad?
9. What level of geographical region will have a squad?
10. What coverage will each squad need to have?

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

1. The National Anti-Gangs Squad (NAGS) is fully operational with taskforces in place in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, as well as liaison officers in South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory.
2. The NAGS is an AFP-led initiative.
3. The AFP received Budget funding totalling \$64 million over four years to deliver the NAGS. On 25 November 2013, the Minister for Justice Michael Keenan endorsed the transfer of \$6.5 million of this allocation to the Australian Crime Commission (ACC) for the administration of the Australian Gangs Intelligence Coordination Centre.
4. The Government's election commitment states that Local Anti-Gang Squads initiatives will "build a series of smaller, better targeted and regionally based anti-gang taskforces. They will work in partnership and consultation with State and Territory law enforcement agencies, while reporting to the Commonwealth's central criminal intelligence and law enforcement agencies".
5. The AFP is currently the primary contributor of personnel to the NAGS. The AFP does not provide resources to State and Territory local police gang units. AFP resources working on gang-related crime do so through the NAGS.
6. There is no known duplication between the NAGS and State and Territory local police gang units. The NAGS enhances the capability of State and Territory law enforcement to combat gang-related activity, through the provision of coordinated investigative, intelligence, technical and asset confiscation support.

7. There are no known difficulties relating to chain of command. The NAGS is an AFP-led initiative and is supported in full by counterparts in State and Territory police organisations. Governance arrangements are in place for matters that arise which require resolution across jurisdictions; they include Operational Command Groups, Joint Management Groups and the Serious and Organised Crime Coordination Committee.

8. The NAGS is a coordinated nation-wide capability, comprising the following key components:

Australian Gangs Intelligence Coordination Centre (AGICC): An ACC-led tactical intelligence capability, which will develop a comprehensive national picture of gang activity to drive preventative and operational activity. Staffed by AFP, ACC, Australian Customs and Border Protection Service, Department of Immigration and Border Protection, Australian Taxation Office and Centrelink officers, it will complement existing State and Territory and AFP intelligence efforts by providing a mechanism through which gang and organised crime tactical intelligence can be centrally collected and analysed.

National Coordination Team (NCT): An AFP team, which will utilise AGICC product to support coordinated cross jurisdiction efforts to tackle priority investigations to dismantle gang-related crime linkages. It will identify emerging trends nationally and internationally and manage referrals to the Criminal Assets Confiscation Taskforce (CACT) for asset confiscation action and to the ATO for civil remedies.

Strike Teams in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria: AFP-led Strike Teams, involving co-located state police and ATO officers. The Strike Teams will provide investigative and overt operational capabilities (to supplement existing State, Territory and Commonwealth capabilities), and will be supported by co-located AFP intelligence analysts.

Regional Technical Capability: Physical and technical surveillance teams will be established for priority use by the NAGS Strike Teams.

Liaison Officers in South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory: The AFP has out posted Liaison Officers to local police gang units in South Australian, Western Australian and the Northern Territory police organisations. These officers act as critical conduits between the AFP and each jurisdiction, facilitating the sharing of intelligence and convergence information from the NCT.

9. Refer to question 8.

10. Refer to question 8.