

1 April 2010

Dr Kathleen Dermody
Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Dear Dr Dermody

In evidence provided to the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee inquiry into matters relating to the Torres Strait Region on 18 December 2009, I responded to questions relating to the Australian Federal Police's (AFP) role in the Torres Strait.


I wish to write and correct the information I provided in line with the comments below.

Question	Answer	Amended Answer
<i>CHAIR—Thank you. Do you have any staff or officers permanently deployed in the Torres Strait region?</i>	<i>We have a Senior Liaison Officer in Port Moresby.</i>	In addition to the Senior Liaison Officer in Port Moresby the AFP operates an Office on Thursday island that is staffed by two members.
<i>Senator KROGER—What, if any, documentation is required for traditional visits?</i>	<i>My understanding is that there is none.</i>	Traditional movements are managed by the use of a system of Traditional Inhabitants Passes under the provisions of the Torres Strait Treaty. This system is an administrative process based on letters of exchange between the respective traditional inhabitant leaders or government officials. Passes are obtained from an authorised official in the inhabitants' home village, the PNG Border Liaison officer in Daru (PNG) or from their Island Community Council.
<i>Senator FORSHAW—No, thank you. Community police officers are engaged by the Queensland government, as I understand it. I do not want to cover any ground that you</i>	<i>I would imagine that the only interaction that we would have with those individuals would be through our Cairns and Townsville offices in the normal course of duties that</i>	<i>In addition, the AFP Resident Agent, Thursday Island conducts regular travel to the outlying islands of the Torres Strait as part of joint patrols with the ACBPS and other</i>

<i>have already covered in other answers, but how much interaction, liaison does the AFP have with them?</i>	they have within those two geographic locations.	agencies. On these occasions liaison is carried out with the community police officers.
--	--	---

I trust this information assists the Committee.

Yours sincerely,



Kevin Zuccato
Assistant Commissioner
Serious & Organised Crime
Australian Federal Police

FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE REFERENCES COMMITTEE
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Senator Forshaw asked the following question at the hearing on 18 December 2009:

Have the AFP ever recruited any personnel from the Torres Strait Island communities

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

Yes. The AFP currently employs a staff member attached to the Thursday Island office. The member has been employed by the AFP since 2000. He is a Clan elder of the Kaurareg Clan in the Torres Strait and is proficient in the Creol, Pidgin and PNG Moto languages and holds a Master 5 certificate in maritime vessel operation.

He also provides a role in the collection of intelligence on behalf of the AFP due to his life long association with local communities in the Torres Strait.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE REFERENCES COMMITTEE
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Senator Trood asked the following question at the hearing on 18 December 2009:

Your submission, and it has been raised in a couple of other submissions to the inquiry, talks about how photo identification might better enable identification of people travelling back and forth across the border.

Have you pressed this suggestion through any of the councils which relate to the management of the Torres Strait region?

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

The AFP and Australian Customs and Border Protection Service (ACBPS) are standing members of the Interdepartmental Committee on the Torres Strait Treaty that is chaired by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The issue has been raised by ACBPS with the full support of the AFP on a number of occasions.

The matter was also raised as an agenda item at the 2009 Transnational Crime Conference (TNCC) involving delegates from ACBPS, AFP, Queensland Police Service, Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary and PNG Customs. The TNCC unanimously endorsed the need for improved methods of identifying traditional border crossings in the Torres Strait for law enforcement purposes. The TNCC supported the development of a suitable identification process containing biographical details of the holder to support law enforcement, other government agencies and communities on both sides of the border.

This issue is an ongoing concern to the AFP and other law enforcement agencies as "traditional inhabitants" in the treaty zone have limited access to adequate identification documentation and the current process may prove attractive to those with criminal intent.