

Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement

Inquiry into the Australian Crime Commission Annual Report 2013–14

Question on Notice –ACC

Senator KETTER: Going back to Attero for a second—and I do not want to create any extra work for the organisation, so tell me if this is going to cause you a lot of administration to do—in terms of the breakdown of the charges, you have detailed in your report that there is serious assault and stalking, going up to kidnapping, firearms and drug offences. Do you have that catalogued in terms of the numbers?

Mr Dawson: We will have a list of that, unless Warren tells me otherwise.

Mr Gray: We should have the breakdown available publicly. One would assume that they would be public, because they are public offences. We will just check on that, otherwise we can provide it in camera or something.

Senator KETTER: I would appreciate that.

Australian Crime Commission

Answer:

Attero National Task Force report and arrest statistics included in the ACC Annual Report 2013–14 were compiled from data stored on jurisdictional police databases and reported to the Attero National Task Force Secretariat by Task Force agencies.

The statistics collected represent high-level data and do not include a breakdown of the type of offences. Type of offence data was not collected during the course of the Attero National Task Force, nor is it collected routinely during other such ACC task force arrangements. To do so now would require an unreasonable diversion of resources.

The Attero National Task Force provided unprecedented unique and distinct benefits in presenting a united front to a serious and organised crime threat through a collegiate approach. The question of how jurisdictional police offences are recorded within ACC Task Forces will be considered as part of the Task Force's final evaluation.

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Senator KETTER: I am also from Queensland, so I have an interest in the position with respect to the Attero National Task Force. I am new to this area, but 3,000 arrests seems like quite a commendable achievement. Are you able to give us a breakdown by state of where those arrests have been made?

Mr Dawson: We would have to take that on notice, but I am confident we would be able to provide a breakdown.

Australian Crime Commission

Answer:

Attero National Task Force report and arrest statistics included in the ACC Annual Report 2013–14 were compiled from data stored on jurisdictional police databases and reported to the Attero National Task Force Secretariat by Task Force agencies as follows:

State/Territory	Number of reports/arrest
Victoria	80
New South Wales	364
Tasmania	82
South Australia	34
Northern Territory	43
Australian Capital Territory	7
Western Australia	36
Queensland	1630
Total	2276

Attero National Task Force total report and arrest statistics from February 2012 to 31 December 2014 are as follows:

State/Territory	Number of reports/arrest
Victoria	181
New South Wales	813
Tasmania	149
South Australia	120
Northern Territory	105
Australian Capital Territory	58
Western Australia	114
Queensland	2539
Total	4079

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Question on Notice –ACC

Senator LEYONHJELM: That is fine. I have two other separate issues. I do not want a long answer to this, but what proportion of your work—what proportion of your time and your budget—would be committed to crimes relating to drugs?

Mr Dawson: I do not have an answer for you, Senator, in terms of giving you an accurate response.

Senator LEYONHJELM: Estimates are fine.

Mr Dawson: We have got estimates in a few weeks time.

Senator LEYONHJELM: I do not mean that kind of estimates. I might ask you then. Is it half, three-quarters, 80 per cent?

Mr Dawson: If I could answer it this way—and I will try and keep to a short answer, given the way you framed the question—with the example I gave of the Eligo task force and chasing the money. Every time we have interdicted a remittance courier—and most of them are couriers—we double up our effort with primarily police partners by executing search warrants, simultaneously as we are collecting cash—as we are intercepting that cash—and there are two other things that we often find: drugs and firearms. They are probably the three common denominators when we do task force Eligo. And it is not just that; we will do the same through Attero, with the bikies and whatever. But they are the three common ingredients that we are finding.

Senator LEYONHJELM: I might come back to you in estimates when you have got time to have a think about an answer that is a bit more quantitative.

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

Australian Crime Commission

The Australian Crime Commission (ACC) has a number of aspects to its work program that combined together make up a broad strategy to *discover*, *understand* and *respond* to the threat of illicit drugs, including:

- discovering and understanding the illicit drug threat
- discovering and disrupting the highest risk crime threats – including Outlaw Motor Cycle Gangs (OMCGs), and
- ‘following the money’.

Discovering and understanding the illicit drug threat

The ACC Board-authorized High Risk and Emerging Drugs No.2 (HRED No.2) Special Operation was established to focus solely on discovering, understanding and informing the response to threats posed by illicit drug markets. During the 2013–14 Financial Year, HRED No.2:

- conducted 17 coercive examinations to fill intelligence gaps, identify insights and enhance understanding of serious and organised crime threats and targets related to the nature and extent of the threat and harms from high risk and emerging drugs markets in Australia
- produced 85 intelligence products which were shared with partners through 321 disseminations—adding to the national picture of serious and organised crime
- worked to discover, understand and respond to market trends, including the methylamphetamine (‘Ice’) market which remains the highest priority for the special operation
- focussed on other illicit drug markets, including drug analogues and new psychoactive substances, illicit pharmaceuticals, cocaine, cannabis and amphetamine-type stimulants, and

- focussed on gaining a broader understanding of internet-based transactions, supported legislative reform, provided specialist advice through our Specialist Forensic Chemist on technical issues related to illicit substances and monitored key chemicals and diversion to drug manufacture.

The work undertaken under the HRED Special Operation is also supported and complemented by other ACC strategies to counter crime threats that overlap and are related to illicit drugs.

Discovering and disrupting the highest risk crime threats (including Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs)

The ACC Board authorised Highest Risk Criminal Targets No. 2 (HRCT No.2) Special Investigation aims to identify, detect and disrupt the highest risk serious and organised crime entities in Australia. The majority of these entities are active in illicit drug markets. This can be demonstrated by the significant drug seizures undertaken through this Special Investigation during the 2013–14 Financial Year recorded in the summary table below. These results demonstrate that by targeting and disrupting high threat targets, the threat of illicit drugs can simultaneously be responded to.

The ACC Board-authorized OMCG Special Operation was established to reduce the risk posed by OMCGs. The ACC facilitates this through the Australian Gangs Intelligence Coordination Centre (AGICC) and providing intelligence support to the Australian Federal Police (AFP)-led National Anti-Gangs Squad. These gangs are prominent in most aspects of organised crime and a significant proportion of this includes illicit drugs.

‘Following the money’

Another significant ACC strategy is to ‘follow the money’ through the ACC Board-authorized Targeting Criminal Wealth No.2 (TCW No.2) Special Investigation. The work under this Special Investigation indicates that the majority of funds that are laundered in, through or from Australia are the proceeds of drug related activity and this is reflected in the drug seizure results for this Investigation noted in the table below.

By way of specific example, the Eligo National Taskforce established in 2012 under the TCW Special Operation has been the largest and most successful money laundering investigation in Australian history, to date. Since commencement, Eligo has undertaken significant operational activity culminating in the disruption of several global money laundering and drug networks. In conjunction with partner agencies, from commencement to 31 December 2014, Eligo work has resulted in the following illicit drug-specific achievements:

- the seizure of illicit drugs and precursors with a combined estimated street value of more than \$878 million
- identification of eight (8) clandestine laboratories – three of which were commercial amphetamine laboratories, including one of the largest and most sophisticated clandestine laboratories discovered by Victoria Police
- shutting down one of the largest urban hydroponic cannabis grow houses discovered by the NSW Police Force, and
- the single seizure of 135kg of methylamphetamine (‘Ice’) in Melbourne valued at more than \$130 million or 1.3 million street deals.

These results demonstrate that our targeting criminal wealth strategy is also effective in responding to the threat of illicit drugs.

The following summary of statistics by ACC Special Operations and Investigations demonstrates the estimated dollar value of drugs and precursors seized on the street during the 2013–14 Financial Year¹:

ACC Determination	Drug ESV	Precursor² ESV
High Risk Criminal Targets No.2	\$244,648,327	\$107,960,877
Targeting Criminal Wealth No.2	\$140,424,055	\$6,191,755
Outlaw Motor Cycle Gangs	\$1,772,370	NA
National Indigenous Intelligence Task Force	\$22,000	NA
High Risk and Emerging Drugs No.2	\$80,000	NA
National Security Impacts from Serious and Organised Crime No.2	NA	\$18,000,000
Total	\$386,946,752	\$132,152,632

The ACC continually monitors the threat posed by illicit drug markets and the time and budget committed to responding to drug-related criminal activity is considered commensurate with the extent of the threat and through a range of relevant strategies.

¹ One individual was charged under both HRCT and TCW determinations during the 2013–14 Financial Year. Therefore, when the agency total is broken down by determination, the total will be one greater than the Annual report ACC persons charged total of 371.

² Calculated by estimating the production potential of the drug the precursor contributes to producing, when sold on the street.

Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement — Question on Notice

Australian Crime Commission

Senator Leyonhjelm:

Noting the response received on 18 March 2015 to a Question on Notice asked by Senator Leyonhjelm at a public hearing in Canberra on 11 February 2015, what proportion of the Australian Crime Commission's time and budget is committed to investigating drug related crime?

ACC Response:

Serious and organised crime syndicates are often involved in multiple crimes, including drug manufacture and trafficking, money laundering, violence and fraud. Accordingly, accurately quantifying the proportion of time and budget that is *committed* to specifically investigating drug-related crime by the Australian Crime Commission (ACC) does not reflect the interdependencies with other ACC work where drug-related crime is often present but not the primary focus of the investigation.

Noting this caveat and recognising the illicit drug market is a major source of income for serious and organised crime, the ACC estimates it invests 33 per cent of agency effort on illicit drugs.