PJC ACLEI—inquiry into the integrity of Australia's border arrangements

Written QONs from 1 August 2017

Agency: AusCheck

Senator McKenzie asked the following question at the hearing on 1 August 2017:

Question

ANAO audit report No. 39 of 2010–11

The Australian National Audit Office's performance audit report No. 39 of 2010–11, *Management of the Aviation and Maritime Security Identification Card Schemes*, identified a number of weaknesses in the administration of the ASIC/MSIC schemes at that time, and particularly noted risks relating to issuing bodies and visitor management at ports. It further noted that these risks are inherent in the devolved nature of the schemes.

1. The audit noted that it is difficult obtain a reliable count of the total number of current ASIC and MSIC cards, or to establish the currency of all cards on the AusCheck database. Has this situation been improved?

Answer

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

The situation described in the ANAO's report has significantly improved since 2011. The AusCheck system has undergone substantial developments, the number of Issuing Bodies (IBs) has decreased from 202 to 62, and there is regular ongoing engagement between AusCheck, the Office of Transport Security (OTS), and the IBs.

Since 2010 AusCheck has developed a system-to-system interface that allows IBs to report real-time updates to the AusCheck card register.

The AusCheck system remains reliant on the IBs, however, to ensure the status of all cards is accurately updated. Since 2010 there have been significant advances in the procedures employed by the IBs to ensure their "registers" match the information in AusCheck's system. These advances have been facilitated by having fewer IBs than was the case in 2010, and by regular communication between AusCheck, OTS and the IBs. That communication includes monthly teleconferences and triannual fora in

which AusCheck, OTS and the IBs discuss process improvements such as timely updating of the AusCheck system.

AusCheck notes the integration of the system-to-system interface by the IBs requires software development work on their part which is impacted by commercial factors beyond AusCheck's control.

AusCheck holdings show that in FY2016-17, 0.24% of eligible decisions resulted in a card that was cancelled within 14 days of the decision and not immediately replaced. This number could be considered an approximation for the number of cards that were inaccurately marked as "Issued" but were never issued.