



Submission No 16

Watching Brief on the War on Terrorism

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Dr Margot Kerley
Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Defence and Trade
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Dr Kerley

Thank you for your letter of 16 March 2004 seeking responses to a number of questions taken on notice at the hearing of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade on 8 March 2004.

At the time I indicated to you that the questions taken on notice related to the activities of agencies other than the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, but that I was happy to coordinate the responses for the Committee. I have therefore consulted with the Department of Defence, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Department of Transport and Regional Services, the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation. The responses provided by those departments and agencies are attached.

I understand that the Committee Secretariat has been unable to elicit further information from Mr Byrne in relation to the question he placed on notice regarding an alleged incident in which a domestic airport terminal operator forced the release of a suspect after he or she had been apprehended by an Australian Protective Service office (page 234 of the transcript). The AFP has advised me that it has been unable to identify the alleged incident without further information and is therefore unable to provide a response to this question.

I also took a question on notice regarding the operation of the terrorist-tracking unit in ASIO. I have been advised by ASIO that it would not be appropriate to provide details about the unit in a public forum, but that a private briefing to the Committee could be arranged if necessary.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Metcalfe', written in a cursive style.

Andrew Metcalfe
Deputy Secretary

6 April 2004

Mr Scott asked:

1. I did not notice a plan involving the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry in any of the reports here. I just wondered why. Firstly, has there been any planning? Secondly, agricultural departments anywhere do not seem to be mentioned. Thirdly, given that we could possibly see that sort of virus released into remote parts of Australia, what sort of work is being done to identify stock movements and to quarantine to those areas?
2. In terms of tracking the movement of livestock, one of the first things we saw with the foot-and-mouth outbreak in the United Kingdom was the government's ability to quarantine areas and close them down. What sorts of logistic methods have you identified for Australia? Are you tracking where livestock have moved?
3. Other questions flow from that: the cost of livestock, identification of movement, who is going to bear the costs of compensation and all those things.

Answers:

1. The Australian livestock sector has well developed and practised emergency response arrangements. These formally agreed arrangements are scalable and bring together the Australian Government, State and Territory governments and industry to put in place a fully coordinated response. They include a national cost sharing agreement, the AUSVETPLAN and a national memorandum of understanding for responding to a major disease outbreak (such as foot and mouth disease) that was agreed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in December 2002. These systems would be used for any incident whether naturally occurring or deliberate.

The arrangements have been tested both through real events and during simulation exercises - the most notable being Exercise Minotaur, held in September 2002, which tested national framework capability. Plans and response capability are subject to continuous improvement as a result of any lessons learned post an event.

When there is an actual incident, the normal response systems would be automatically used. If a deliberate act were suspected, the arrangements under the National Counter Terrorism Plan would be activated with the Protective Security Coordination Centre and State and Territory police being notified. The two aspects of the response (crisis and consequence management) would then cooperate to both resolve the emergency and pursue the perpetrators.

2. These issues are addressed in detail by the Australian Veterinary Emergency Plan (AUSVETPLAN) (<http://www.aahc.com.au/ausvetplan/#ops>).

The concept of quarantine with respect to animal disease has a long history and Australian animal health authorities have had the capacity to quarantine areas and close them down for many years. The legislative control for quarantining of areas and livestock movement controls lies in the first instance with the State and Territory governments. These powers have been used to varying degrees for a number of diseases within Australia. Recent amendments to the *Quarantine Act 1908* add another layer of assurance by providing authority to the States

and Territories to utilise the provisions of the Act to deal with the movement of animals and people, should that be required and requested.

Sections 2.2.1 and 3.2.2 of the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) manual in AUSVETPLAN detail the quarantine and movement control procedures for FMD. State and Territory authorities have also recently agreed to the concept of a national livestock standstill immediately that FMD is confirmed in Australia. This national livestock standstill would effectively stop movements of FMD-susceptible livestock until sufficient information is available to limit areas that need to be controlled by quarantine and strict movement control.

Australia has well developed livestock tracing systems in place that are administered by State and Territory Governments. During the last 30 years, the primary means of tracing livestock movements has been the tail-tag system for cattle and the waybill system for sheep. In April 2003, Australian Government, State and Territory Agriculture Ministers agreed to develop and implement an enhanced system for livestock identification and tracing based on the National Livestock Identification Scheme for cattle and the National Flock Identification Scheme for sheep. The enhanced systems for cattle and sheep will provide for whole-of-life traceability and will significantly improve the speed and accuracy of animal traceback and traceforward activities. States and Territories have agreed to have these new systems in place by 1 July 2005 (or earlier in some cases).

3. The Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement (EADRA) is the key document that details the compensation arrangements for affected livestock owners during an emergency animal disease, and questions and answers on the operation of the EADRA are publicly available (see <http://www.aahc.com.au/eadp/deed.pdf>).

It was ratified in 2002 and was signed by all governments and peak industry bodies. It covers only the direct costs associated with disease control and these include compensation to primary producers directly affected by the disease and who have animals or property destroyed directly as a result of the eradication program. Compensation is not payable for indirect costs and consequential losses for owners directly or indirectly affected by the disease control program (e.g. loss of markets). However, additional government assistance may be provided on a case-by-case basis to minimise the impact on affected owners, such as through social welfare payments and other income assistance.

Mr Byrne asked:

Does anyone in that airport, other than Vic Police or Federal Police, have any override on that APS Officer? If that person is executing an apprehension and a person is apprehended, does anyone other than those you have just stated have the authority to then ask that the person be released?

Answer:

The decision to arrest a person for an offence is one that can only be made by the arresting officer based on the circumstances and the information presented. At the scene of arrest, only the arresting officer may release a person they have arrested. Subsequent to this, a person may be released on the order of a watch house supervisor or magistrate.

Mr Snowden asked:

Following on from Mr Scott's question, the issue of feral animals, as opposed to controlled stock, is something we will need to have some information about, so could you take that question on notice as well. I am thinking particularly of feral pigs. There are tens of millions of the things, and they are not easily herded.

Answer:

The issue of feral animals has also been examined in some detail and AUSVETPLAN has a manual specifically designed to address their involvement in an emergency animal disease outbreak (see <http://www.aahc.com.au/ausvetplan/wamfinal.pdf>).

In addition, the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry held a workshop in November 2003 to specifically address the use of decision support tools and the management of feral pigs in an Emergency Animal Disease event. This workshop was organised to deal with a number of recommendations contained in a paper prepared by an animal health committee working group that reviewed the potential role of feral animals in an outbreak of FMD. The review confirmed that, despite common public perceptions, in most situations feral pigs would not be a significant factor in the maintenance or spread of an incursion of FMD in Australia.

Mr Snowden asked:

And on the question of offshore events – and I understand if you are unable to answer in the forum as it is currently constructed – I am interested in the assets that might be around the place to ensure timely response to an incident, say, on the North West Shelf or in the Timor Sea, bearing in mind that the location would require a particular form of transport and response from either the defence forces or state police.

Answer:

The specific availabilities of maritime units to respond to various requirements are classified. The positions of units patrolling the NW Shelf are continually changing, while other units will transit through the area enroute to other activities. Maritime units maintain a regular presence in the Timor Sea and conduct frequent surveillance in the area. Therefore, while specific availabilities cannot be discussed, a variety of maritime units are available to respond.

Mr Price asked:

Perhaps this is the wrong question to start with but, Mr Metcalfe, you mentioned the newly created reserve response force. In you plan, because these are blended units, how long will they take to muster? How long will they take to be transported to the incident site? Are they being exercised in Mercury 04?

Answer:

The Ready Reserve Force (RRF) will take 28 days to muster, however, depending upon personal circumstances some members may be available for tasking prior to 28 days.

The RRF can be rapidly deployed to an incident site, however, exact timeframes will be dependent on location and situation.

One RRF, namely 4 Bde RRF (including elements of 1st Commando Regiment) was exercised on Mercury 04 over the weekend 27/28 March 2004 in Victoria.

Deployment of the RRF is not the Army's first response to situations which may require ADF support to Australian Government, State and Territory agencies. The RRF has been established as a follow-on force to support the existing higher readiness ADF force elements currently reflected in the National Counter-Terrorism Plan. In addition, the RRF has application under Defence Aid to the Civil Community criteria, in a supporting role to Australian Government, State and Territory agencies.

Mr Ashton asked:

Could we ask you to provide us with a list of the airports that will be required to do these plans?

Answer:

176 airports will be subject to aviation security regulation under the new regime. (Airports currently regulated in bold type.)

Western Australia

Perth	Albany
Broome	Esperance
Kalgoorlie	Carnarvon
Karratha	Learmonth
Port Hedland	Leonora
Geraldton	Christmas Island
Newman	Leinstar
Kununurra	Cocos Island
Paraburdoo	Shark Bay/Monkey Mia
Derby/Curtin	Laverton
Fitzroy Crossing	Mount Magnet
Halls Creek	Meekatharra
Wiluna	Jandakot
Total: 26	

South Australia

Adelaide
Port Lincoln
Mount Gambia
Kingscote
Whyalla
Olympic Dam
Ceduna
Port Augusta
Cooper Pedy
Parafield
Total: 10

Victoria

Melbourne (Tullamarine)

Mildura

Portland

Avalon

Mount Hotham

Total: 10

Warrnambool

Hamilton

Latrobe Valley

Essendon

Moorabbin

Queensland

Brisbane

Cairns

Coolangatta

Townsville

Mackay

Hamilton Island

Rockhampton

Maroochydore

Gladstone

Mount Isa

Proserpine

Bundaberg

Karumba

Birdsville

Bedourie

Boulia

Clermont

Aurukun

Windorah

Horn island

Boigu

Sue

Murray

Total:67

Bamaga

Kubin

Dunk Island

Cooktown

Charleville

Normanton

Doomadgee

Mornington Island

Lizard Island

Hughenden

Richmond

Julia Creek

Thangool

Palm Island

Blackall

Coen

Quilpie

Oakey

Winton

Moranbah

Saibai

Coconut

Mabuiag

Emerald

Maryborough

Weipa

Hervey Bay

Roma

Longreach

Cloncurry

Toowoomba

Edward River

Kowanyama

Burketown

Iron Range

Cunnamulla

Barcaldine

Thargomindah

Yorke Island

Saint George

Archerfield

Badu

Yam

Darnley

New South Wales

Sydney

Coffs Harbour

Williamtown

Griffith

Albury

Dubbo

Port Macquarie

Moree

Ballina

Wagga Wagga

Tamworth

Bankstown

Grafton

Norfolk Island

Orange

Bathurst

Lismore

Belmont

Coonabarabran

Broken Hill

Narrabri

Moruya

Armidale

Lord Howe Island

Parke	Taree
Narrandera	Cooma
Mudgee	Cobar
Inverell	Bourke
Lightning Ridge	Walgett
Glen Innes	Coonamble
Gunnedah	Merimbula
Total:38	

Tasmania

Hobart	Devonport
Launceston	Burnie
King Island	Flinders Island
Total: 6	

Northern Territory

Darwin	Victoria River Downs
Alice Springs	Hooker Creek
Ayers Rock	Kalkgurung
Gove	Yuendumu
Maningrida	Numbulwar
Katherine	Lake Evella
Groote Eylandt	Ramingining
Elcho Island	Milingimbi
Tennant Creek	Katherine/Tindal
Total:18	

Australian Capital Territory

Canberra
Total: 1

Mr Price asked:

Is there any review being undertaken with respect to re-establishing an ASIO office in Tasmania?

Answer:

ASIO manages its liaison with Tasmanian authorities from Melbourne with officers visiting Tasmania on a regular basis. Senior Canberra-based managers also meet Tasmanian authorities. The frequency of visits has increased since the 11 September attacks. ASIO has electronic links with Tasmania Police who receive intelligence advice, including threat assessments, at the same time as other Australian agencies.