



ASIC
Australian Securities &
Investments Commission

Committee	Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services
Inquiry	Oversight of ASIC, the Takeovers Panel and the Corporations Legislation No.1 of the 46th Parliament
Question No.	004
Topic	Crypto - Resourcing
Reference	Spoken, 5 December 2022, Hansard page 33
Committee member	Senator Deborah O'Neill

Question

CHAIR: When we've heard evidence from AUSTRAC in other inquiries, Mr Longo, you've raised concerns about money-laundering—counterterrorism finance, I'm sure, is part of it, the use of bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies for the payment of ransomware—and the public debate about that, particularly in light of the impact of the Medicare Private theft.

I wonder if the board, the commissioners at ASIC, have given really careful consideration to the scale of our response to this, the resource allocation. Is it fit for purpose? You might want to make an initial remark but I invite you to go away and have a really good look at that and come back to us on notice.

Mr Longo: I'm happy to reflect on that remark and get back to the committee in writing. I don't think it is important to stress for today's purposes. We're talking about an activity that is not covered by the corporations legislation, as it stands, nor are we funded to do anything more than we're already doing. I think it reasonable to say that we're doing our best to respond to what is clearly an emerging phenomenon from our existing resources within a limited legislative framework.

The other aspects are, really, as I've said publicly before, the big problems we're facing as a community and that ASIC is expected to contribute to—we can't solve these problems by ourselves. You've mentioned AUSTRAC. To AUSTRAC I would add the Reserve Bank, I would add the ACCC and I would add government; I would add Treasury. There are a lot of complex moving parts here. How we come up with a whole-of-government, whole-of-regulatory-community response, is going to require a lot of collaboration. But, absolutely, ASIC is committed to doing what we can do. For today's purposes, I think we are deploying as many resources as we can, to this issue, given—if I may be forgiven for observing—the many other issues we're being asked to address and deal with in our normal day-to-day work. I am personally confident that we are focusing on crypto. We've said that in our corporate plan and it's one of our top eight priorities. It's a matter that I am personally very concerned about and I have been from the beginning. ASIC's commitment to being part of the solution here will continue.

Answer

ASIC allocated approximately 35 full time equivalent staff members to work on crypto related matters as part of its business planning process for 2022-23.

This figure includes a Crypto Coordination Team and approximately 18 full time equivalent Enforcement staff allocated to crypto.