



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

# Official Committee Hansard

JOINT COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION

**Reference: Immigration entry requirements for the Olympic Games**

FRIDAY, 5 FEBRUARY 1999

CANBERRA

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## JOINT COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION

Friday, 5 February 1999

**Members:** Mrs Gallus (*Chair*), Senators Bartlett, Eggleston, McKiernan and Tierney, Mr Baird, Mrs Irwin, Ms May, Mr Ripoll and Dr Theophanous

**Senators and members in attendance:** Senator McKiernan, Mrs Gallus, Ms May, Mr Ripoll, Dr Theophanous

### Terms of reference for the inquiry:

The efficient planning and co-ordination of immigration arrangements for the Olympic and Paralympic Games will be a key contributor to the success of the Games. Positive experiences in obtaining visas, entering, staying in and leaving Australia, will assist Australia in gaining opportunities for the development of business, tourism and its place in the world as a multicultural nation. The Committee will inquire into and report on:

- (1) Australia's immigration temporary entry provisions and their capacity to meet the special needs arising from the Games;
- (2) The planned immigration arrangements for the entry and departure of Olympic and Paralympic Family Members at the time of the Games; and
- (3) The planning and co-ordination arrangements for informing visitors of the entry requirements at the time of the Games.

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**Committee met at 9.06 a.m.**

**CHAIR**—I open the first public hearing of the committee's inquiry into immigration entry arrangements for the Olympic and the Paralympic Games. This matter was referred to the committee in June 1998. The inquiry lapsed when the election was called last year. However, the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs re-referred the matter to the new committee on 16 December 1998. The terms of reference are not very long and I would like to read them into the record at this point.

The committee will inquire into and report on, firstly, Australia's immigration temporary entry provisions and their capacity to meet the special needs arising from the games; secondly, the planned immigration arrangements for the entry and departure of Olympic and Paralympic family members at the time of the games, and the planning and coordination arrangements for informing visitors of the entry requirements at the time of the games.

As stated in the references, the purpose of the inquiry is to review issues related to the planning and coordination of immigration entry arrangements for the Olympic and Paralympic Games and also the exit of visitors and athletes. The terms of reference note that positive experiences in obtaining a visa, entering, staying and leaving Australia will assist Australia in gaining opportunities for the development of business, tourism and its place in the world as a multicultural national. I did not read that, but that is actually in the preamble to the exact terms of reference. The committee wholeheartedly agrees with this and hopes that this inquiry can play a constructive role in ensuring that visitors to Australia for the games have trouble free arrivals and departures.

At this hearing members will hear evidence from a number of government departments which will play a key role in organising the entry of thousands of athletes, coaches, media and advisers to the Olympic Games. Further details about the inquiry can be obtained from the committee staff.

**Resolved (on motion by Senator McKiernan):**

That submissions Nos 1 to 5, 7, 9 to 11 and 13 to 17 be accepted as evidence to the inquiry into immigration entry arrangements for the Olympic and Paralympic Games and be authorised for publication.

**CHAIR**—A number of submissions have been received with the request that they remain confidential.

**Resolved (on motion by Dr Theophanous):**

That submissions Nos 6, 8 and 12 be accepted as confidential evidence to the inquiry into immigration entry arrangements for the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

**CHAIR**—I now welcome witnesses from the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs.

**CASTELLO, Mr Dario, Assistant Secretary, Border Control Branch, Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs**

**METCALFE, Mr Andrew, First Assistant Secretary, Border Control and Compliance Division, Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs**

**RIZVI, Mr Abul, Acting First Assistant Secretary, Migration and Temporary Entry Division, Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs**

**WALKER, Mr Terry, Director, Olympics Coordination Section, Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs**

**CHAIR**—I have just been told that Channel 9 want to film, and I am sure you have no objection to smiling at the camera. Although the committee does not require witnesses to give evidence under oath, you should understand these hearings are legal proceedings of the parliament and warrant the same respect as proceedings of the parliament itself. Giving false or misleading evidence is a serious matter and may be regarded as contempt of parliament. Are there any corrections or amendments you would like to make to your submission? We note that we have now got the final submission. We originally got the draft.

**Mr Metcalfe**—There are no corrections, Madam Chair.

**CHAIR**—Good. Would you like to make an opening statement?

**Mr Metcalfe**—Madam Chair and committee members, the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs welcomes the committee's inquiry into immigration entry arrangements for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. We look forward to working closely with the committee during the course of your review. As of this morning, there are 588 days to the opening ceremony of the Sydney 2000 Olympics. The games in Sydney in September-October 2000 will place Australia in the international spotlight and present a number of interesting challenges to many agencies. DIMA, with responsibility for the entry of non-citizens, is no exception.

DIMA has lodged a submission with the committee, and I do not propose to summarise that paper, but there are some key issues that I would like to mention: firstly, DIMA's commitment to the games. I would like to say very clearly at the outset that DIMA is strongly committed to the success of the games. We have been involved with the Sydney 2000 Olympics since 1992 and will continue to work diligently to ensure that we discharge our responsibilities efficiently and in a professional manner. To achieve this goal, we are working closely with other federal agencies, particularly the border control and the law enforcement bodies. We are also working closely with SOCOG and SPOC, the Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games and the Sydney Paralympic Organising Committee, and have recently arranged for a senior DIMA officer from Sydney to work with SOCOG on a part-time basis.

Under the Migration Act, DIMA has responsibility for regulating in the national interest the entry into and presence in Australia of non-citizens. Let me assure the committee that between now and the games and during the games themselves there will be no relaxation of

the administration of the government's entry policies. However, special entry arrangements are being put in place to ensure that Olympic and Paralympic family members can enter Australia for the games with a minimum of inconvenience, while maintaining our border integrity. The special entry arrangements are outlined in our submission. In summary, DIMA and SOCOG's computer systems are being linked and the entry of athletes and officials will be managed electronically.

Let me say that this is a first. At previous Olympic Games, the entry process was handled manually, with the Olympic identity card being, in effect, the visa to enter. While SOCOG will still produce a card for the Sydney games, DIMA will be using our computerised entry systems to manage the entry of the athletes, officials, accredited media, major sponsors and other Olympic and Paralympic family members. These special arrangements will apply for one month before and one month after the games, an undertaking the then minister, Gerry Hand, gave in 1992 to the Sydney Olympic Bid Committee.

This does not mean that athletes and officials can simply come into Australia. Each non-citizen will be checked against the department's movement alert list. In fact, a lot of the work that has been going on in recent years to enhance and improve the movement alert list has been undertaken with the Olympics in mind. The DIMA entry systems are continually being improved and are more effective now than they were a number of years ago.

Increasing numbers of non-citizens will enter Australia for the games. DIMA aims to make it as seamless as possible for tourists, business people and other temporary residence applicants, both in obtaining visas and in entering Australia for the games. At the same time, we want to ensure that any persons who may pose a threat to the Australian community or the games are identified when they apply for a visa and are not granted a visa. It is expected that nearly 80 per cent of tourists and business people will come from traditional high volume, low risk markets that are eligible for the electronic travel authority, a visa issuing system that has been in place for nearly three years. Again, we will be using existing and proven technology.

During the course of the inquiry and in the lead-up to the games, some industry groups may well press for the introduction of visa-free arrangements. This issue was last addressed by the committee in January 1996, when the committee released their report into Australia's visa system for visitors. The committee concluded that the visa system introduced in 1975 has served Australia well and should be retained.

Having responsibility for the entry of non-citizens, DIMA will make a significant contribution to the security of the games. As I mentioned earlier, the movement alert list will be used to check all non-citizens entering for the games. We are a member of a number of security related, interdepartmental committees and we are strengthening our relationship with law enforcement agencies.

In August 1998, the Australian National Audit Office released its report into the Commonwealth agencies security preparations for the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games. Seven of the 22 recommendations relate to DIMA. We have agreed with those recommendations, have already implemented some, and progress is well under way with the remainder

concerning the department. At the time of the games, DIMA will rely on and, if required, strengthen our overseas border control strategies aimed at dealing with potential immigration problems offshore. For example, currently we have airport liaison officers stationed in four regional airports, and seven specialist Immigration officers working in countries where there is a high incidence of immigration malpractice. If necessary, additional resources will be deployed.

In relation to the issue of claims for protection visas or refugee status in the period leading up to the games and during the games themselves, the department has well-developed procedures in place for dealing with such cases. As we note in the submission, we have already had a number of instances where people have come to Australia for Olympic test events and other major international sporting events and have subsequently lodged applications for refugee status. It would be naive to expect that we would not see more applications, but we believe that our existing procedures for handling those applications will continue to serve Australia and potential asylum seekers well.

Education and awareness is a role that we cannot afford to fall short on and which we are working very hard on. While those in the travel industry are well aware of our visa and entry arrangements, we are looking to spread that information wider for the games than we ever have previously. A booklet on immigration, customs and quarantine entry requirements was released in 1997. The booklet has been updated and reprinted and will soon be issued in a number of community languages through 1999. An Internet web site was established in September last year and is receiving around 3,000 hits a week. The visitor information campaign will continue until the conclusion of the games.

Planning for the Olympics within the department is being coordinated by an executive planning committee comprising senior representatives from Canberra, chaired by the deputy secretary, Mark Sullivan, and state directors from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide, given that all of those states will have Olympic events occurring at the time of the games. In addition, DIMA has designated Olympic contact officers in regional offices in Australia and at all our overseas posts.

In conclusion, as mentioned earlier, DIMA has been involved with the games since July 1992. The games will present us with challenges that we have not had to deal with previously. We are committed to the success of the games. As far as possible, we will be using and building on existing procedures and systems that have been tested and proven. We will do all we can within our legislative and resource framework to ensure that our responsibilities are discharged efficiently and professionally. We have been working steadily to prepare ourselves for one of the largest tasks to ever face the department and, as I said at the beginning of this statement, as of today there are 588 days to go. We believe our planning is on track.

I want to assure the committee that even with a significant increase in activity immediately before and immediately following the games, there will be no relaxation of policy or procedures, but we will do all we can to ensure that bona fide travellers enter and leave Australia as easily as possible. Madam Chair, we will be very happy to provide the committee with assistance during the course of the inquiry and we look forward to any questions you may have.



**CHAIR**—Thank you, Mr Metcalfe, and can I note that you have always been, in all our inquiries, extremely helpful. Can I, just for my own information, separate what I see as being the areas that you were looking at. The first area is the granting of the visa, whether that is through the mission or the ETA overseas, and how people go through that process, whether that is a pleasant process for them or an arduous one. Then there is the arrival and going through the immigration process here. Again, how pleasant a process can we make it? Can we get those people through in that time? Thirdly, there are the special instances of controversial entry and people who might later ask for refugee status, and you have referred to that. Is that how you see it or am I missing some key areas there?

**Mr Metcalfe**—The only addition I would make to that is the last part of the process, and that is assisting the Australian Customs Service and other bodies to ensure the easy departure of people after the games. I think in fact the busiest day expected at Sydney airport is the day immediately following the closing ceremony, so orderly entry is crucial but orderly departure is also important.

**CHAIR**—What role do you play in the departure? The role that you play in the entrance is quite obvious—you are the immigration officers—but what role do you play in the departure?

**Mr Metcalfe**—Our role in the departure is relatively limited. The vast bulk of the operational work is performed by the Australian Customs Service and I am sure that their representatives will be happy to talk about that in more detail when you see them later. Our role relates to ensuring that the overall arrangements are satisfactory, that there is appropriate record-keeping of people departing and that issues such as the use of the outward passenger card and those sorts of details do proceed in an orderly way, but I agree that our primary focus is on the visa process as well as the entry process.

**CHAIR**—Thank you. You made reference in your opening remarks to people claiming refugee status. You believe that is going to occur. I think you have stated in your submission that you think that is inevitable. But how do you see this occurring? Is this amongst the athletes, amongst the supporting staff, or is it all through? Which group do you see as most likely to be putting forward refugee claims?

**Mr Metcalfe**—I think it is difficult to speculate as to who potential applicants may be. I think it needs to be seen in the context that people come to Australia and apply for refugee status every day. We do not expect the games to be any different, but what we do expect is that some people who have come here for the games will seek refugee status. We do not have any particular basis of information as to how large the group will be or how small the group will be. We are simply saying we think it will happen because it happens now and there is no reason to believe that it will not happen at the time of the games.

You will appreciate, Madam Chair, that for reasons of privacy and issues to do with sur place refugee status we have not gone into any particular detail about the recent instances that I referred to, but what we have seen are applications from persons seeking to attend as competitors and some people who have been granted visas on the basis that they will be competitors, but I think it is arguable as to whether they are really going to be competitors or not in certain instances. So it has come from people who have been identified by their

national sporting bodies as representing their particular country, but I would not expect that it would be confined only to that group.

**CHAIR**—It is probably my ignorance, but I find it just a little curious, if somebody is in a country, has been chosen to be a representative of that country and then is claiming refugee status because of the fact that they are at risk in their own country. I have trouble seeing how those two jell together.

**Mr Metcalfe**—It is not, obviously, appropriate that I suggest that applicants would be approved or not approved. All sorts of people apply for all sorts of reasons, and whether their claims are successful obviously depends on whether they meet the criteria in the Refugees Convention. The issue of whether they are representing their country, are well established in their country or whatever, may be factors taken into account in any decision.

**CHAIR**—Still on that general area, you have looked at what happened during the Atlanta Olympics. What has that told you?

**Mr Metcalfe**—I think that the conclusion we have from Atlanta, and certainly the anecdotal evidence, is that in fact the Americans received very few applications for refugee status associated directly with the Atlanta Olympics, but I think that that needs a little explanation in that Australia's processes and ability to measure applications in particular places at particular points of time are probably better than those of some other countries which have far more airports, far more processing officers and simply larger numbers of people. So while I think that there was one particular sporting team that sought refugee status at the time of the Atlanta Olympics, there may well have been other applicants who were not identified in statistics as being people who arrived for the purpose of the Olympics.

**CHAIR**—I have other questions but I will leave them for later and, for the moment, hand over to the deputy chair, who I am sure has some questions of his own.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—How will the accreditation passes be checked against persons coming in now for training purposes? No national selections would have been made, I would assume, at this point in time, and I understand from media comment that there are some people already in Australia who have an expectation they will be competitors.

**Mr Metcalfe**—I might make some general observations, and others may want to provide some more detail. I referred during my opening statement, and we refer in our submission, to the special purpose visa that will be used for accredited members of the Olympic family and which will be the process whereby we, together with SOCOG, will be able to handle their entry and accreditation and checking against warning lists. That particular process is applicable to the month before and the month after the games, in line with the commitment given by the then minister in 1992.

For persons wanting to come to Australia in advance of that period, normal entry arrangements and normal visa arrangements will apply. There is a large number of Olympic test events occurring. We have had the first, and there is going to be a large number, 20 or 30, between now and the games. In relation to people entering for those test events, we have an arrangement that all of our overseas posts are in contact and working with the national

Olympic committees and we are identifying people who are travelling for that purpose to ensure that they are aware of these requirements.

The usual bona fide requirements, et cetera, that go with sporting visas and tourist visas continue to apply. People coming in advance of the one-month period before the games who may be wanting to come to Australia to acclimatise and to train under Australian conditions will be subject to the normal sporting visa arrangements. Those arrangements are very well established and well proven and work efficiently.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Who will make the formal application for the actual special purpose visas that will apply during both sets of games? Will it be the national organisation? Who will do it? It will not up to the individuals at the games to raise it themselves, will it?

**Mr Castello**—It will be the individuals identified and supported by the national Olympic organisation, the national body and through SOCOG to us. It is a combination of factors.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—So they will be selected by their national organisation. The national organisation will then require them to fill in and complete an Australian visa application form which will then be forwarded to SOCOG and which will then be forwarded to the department.

**Mr Castello**—No, the procedure will be that once the athlete has been selected, the next step will be to seek accreditation from SOCOG. It is the accreditation process which is then linked to the department for clearance purposes.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—SOCOG is the body which will make an application for a special purpose visa on behalf of that individual.

**Mr Castello**—The special purpose visa will be automatically available to someone who has been granted accreditation by SOCOG. Part of the process of SOCOG granting that accreditation is that it has come through the department and there is no problem with that particular individual. It is not a formal application as such but it is triggered by the accreditation process.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—SOCOG will then have a requirement that the individual selected by their national Olympic organisation will supply the details that Australia requires on visa application forms, even though it is not a formal visa application form.

**Mr Castello**—That is correct.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Will the national organisation in whatever country require details of the criminal background of the individual and the medical or health requirements of the individual?

**Mr Castello**—No. The details that are required for this type of accreditation are essentially similar to that which applies to applications for electronic travel authorities and other normal applications to enter Australia. That relies simply on the biodata normally covered in the passport. The questions of health and character are not dealt with at the

application stage for this group of people. It is covered, however, in the passenger card that is completed on arrival in Australia. That is the existing process and it would not be any different for this group.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—How will the MAL be triggered in the event of a particular vowel being left out of a name and who will then, in the event of a difficulty at the arrival point at the Australian border, have the responsibility of turning around a potential gold medal winning athlete, to the embarrassment of the Australian authorities? There could be egg on somebody's face at the particular point.

**Mr Metcalfe**—As Mr Castello said, the procedures are very similar to those applicable now for the electronic travel authority, but the basis for the requests will be the accreditation requests that are directed through SOCOG. We mention in our submission there will be an electronic link between SOCOG and DIMA which will provide us with data in relation to the individuals who are seeking to come under accredited arrangements as Olympic family members. We, in turn, will check MAL and with security and law enforcement bodies as necessary in relation to particular individuals. The whole concept is to deal with the issues before a person gets on a plane rather than having to deal with the issue at the airport when they arrive here. That is the strategy behind our entire visa regime.

In what we hope is the very unlikely event that a person gets on a plane without having been through the special purpose process, turns up and, in fact, is a person who is entitled to seek accreditation, or if something arises after the time the visa comes into existence and before they arrive at the airport, we will have special arrangements at Sydney airport in particular to deal with any on-the-spot situations. Again, we mention in the submission that we are going to establish something called the entry response team which is essentially an enhancement of our normal immigration presence at Sydney airport, to work closely with Customs and Quarantine and other agencies as necessary to deal with any particular problems if they arise at the time a person actually arrives.

Finally, in relation to people who may cause concern in terms of their criminal background, or controversial visitors, we are going to establish arrangements under a body currently called the entry advisory group which will be chaired by the occupant of my position and comprise similar officers in other relevant departments—Foreign Affairs, ASIO and so on—to ensure that we can deal very quickly with any such situations and, if necessary, refer the matter to ministers if appropriate. In very simple terms, the process we are seeking with SOCOG is to ensure that we deal with any issues relating to character or other concern before a person travels to Australia, but if that issue arises at Sydney airport upon arrival, then we will have arrangements in place to deal with it quickly at that time.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—My confidence in the department handling it is somewhat dented because of recent events involving a certain troupe coming in from Vietnam. The department did not come out of that episode particularly well, in my judgment. That is just one episode where there was quite a long lead time, as I understand it from media comment, quite different and distinct from what the department and Australia are going to be faced with next year, with those huge numbers coming in at any point in time. What else can you say, Mr Metcalfe, to give me back that confidence that I had that it could be handled meaningfully and efficiently?

**Mr Metcalfe**—In relation to that particular group, not everything you read in the media was necessarily correct.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—I do not want to canvass that.

**Mr Metcalfe**—I will not go into that in any particular detail. But I do think that that sort of case does illustrate the fact that it is important that we work to identify issues at the outset rather than at the last minute. It is important that we work with organisers of major events to ensure that visa issues and visa requirements can be dealt with well in advance rather than at the last minute. I think the arrangements we are putting in place for the Olympic Games are exemplary in that respect in that we have worked very closely for some time with SOCOG and we have a considerable network and an improving network in relation to contact with the sorts of people who will be seeking to come to Australia—national Olympic committees, IOC delegates and whatever. The whole issue, as you correctly identify, is that we need to be planning well in advance. What I think our submission seeks to reassure you on, and our presentation here today seeks to reassure you on, is that we are planning well in advance.

**CHAIR**—Dr Theophanous unfortunately has to leave us at 9.50 to go to another committee and he has some questions I think he wants to put to the department.

**Dr THEOPHANOUS**—My questions actually, in a sense, follow on from the example Senator McKiernan referred to. My questions are not really to do with the official people of SOCOG but with visitors coming to Australia for the games in general. You would agree, I imagine, that it would be pretty unfortunate if Australia were to be represented at the time of the Olympics as discriminating against people from certain countries coming to visit for the Olympic Games.

**Mr Metcalfe**—I would make the point, Dr Theophanous, that we are very proud of our non-discriminatory migration program.

**Dr THEOPHANOUS**—You may be proud of your non-discriminatory migration program, but your visitors program is discriminatory, is it not?

**Mr Metcalfe**—I do not accept that.

**Dr THEOPHANOUS**—You do not accept that. But you have categories of people. There are a number of countries where a person can get into Australia simply by going to a travel agent. Is that correct?

**Mr Metcalfe**—Around 80 per cent of our travellers to Australia from what we identify as high volume, low risk, traditional tourism markets are able to obtain permission to travel to Australia by going to a travel agent but, of course, are subject to the normal questions through their passenger card and a final decision at the airport.

**Dr THEOPHANOUS**—At the airport when they arrive, yes, but the situation is that these agents give these people virtually an automatic visa. Isn't that right?

**Mr Metcalfe**—The agents do not do that, the Australian government has—

**Dr THEOPHANOUS**—It has given the agents the authority to do that.

**Mr Metcalfe**—That is right, effectively, and I think conscious of issues that were considered by this committee back in 1996 in its earlier inquiry. The department was very conscious of the longstanding requirement that all travellers to Australia have a visa and we needed to find ways to ensure that people could access that as easily and as quickly as possible, at the same time balancing the inevitable reality that persons from some places do tend to overstay and do tend to abuse their visa conditions.

**Dr THEOPHANOUS**—Yes, I am aware of all that, but isn't it true that the vast majority of countries of the world are not covered by this system?

**Mr Metcalfe**—Twenty-nine countries are eligible for the electronic travel authority.

**Dr THEOPHANOUS**—So these 29 countries have one system and the other countries have another system. Isn't that right?

**Mr Metcalfe**—Those 29 countries represent our long established, high volume, low risk tourist markets and cover around 80 per cent of all travellers to Australia.

**Dr THEOPHANOUS**—So you are claiming that this system is not discriminatory, even though, for the majority of countries of the world, one has to go through a completely different process, including a detailed examination from immigration officers at embassies. Is that correct?

**Mr Metcalfe**—What I am saying is that the way the visa program is delivered is balanced according to the risk associated with particular travellers. I do not accept that that is discriminatory.

**Dr THEOPHANOUS**—You do not accept that that is discriminatory. You may not accept that, but other countries coming to the Olympic Games might have a different view. You said in your submission that you are perfectly happy with the current system of visa arrangements, and therefore you intend to apply these to the Olympic Games process. Is that correct?

**Mr Metcalfe**—Certainly. I think it is important to debunk the myth that there will be a vast number of extra tourists coming in the year of the Olympics. I think the Tourism Forecasting Council is talking about an increase next year of 200,000 or 300,000 people, the vast majority of whom would come from those 29 countries that are ETA eligible. But we would certainly accept that there will be increased interest in travel to Australia and we certainly will be applying our resources to deal with that.

**Dr THEOPHANOUS**—Isn't it true that the Tourism Council is very concerned about the application of your policy in relation to the non-29 countries?

**Mr Metcalfe**—I think that is a matter for the Tourism Council to give you advice on.

**Dr THEOPHANOUS**—Isn't it true that they have made submissions to you expressing concerns about the way in which that has been administered?

**Mr Metcalfe**—I think that the Tourism Council has a particular view about visas and a particular view about tourism that the government does not necessarily agree with.

**Dr THEOPHANOUS**—So this is a matter of the government, it is not a matter of your administration?

**Mr Metcalfe**—The \$50 fee that applies to persons who are not ETA eligible is a matter that was announced by the government last year in the budget and is the subject of government decision. It is essentially a government policy issued to seek to recover processing costs in low volume, high risk environments, where there are good grounds to accept that close processing is required.

**Dr THEOPHANOUS**—I asked for some figures from your department about visitors' applications and rejection rates. I notice from these figures that, in 1998, 46.5 per cent of applicants from Lebanon were rejected. Are you suggesting that nearly one in every two persons in Lebanon who may apply to come here, either to visit their relatives or to visit Australia, is not a genuine person?

**Mr Metcalfe**—I think that figure indicates that 46 per cent of people have been rejected presumably because there was an assessment made in relation to their application that their travel was not likely to be genuine.

**Dr THEOPHANOUS**—Isn't it true that your officers are given instructions to reject people from countries such as Lebanon?

**Mr Metcalfe**—Our officers around the world are required to assess all applicants, based on the most objective possible decision, as to whether or not those persons will abide by the conditions of their stay.

**Dr THEOPHANOUS**—Isn't it true that many members of parliament have made submissions to you about people from Lebanon and other so-called key countries where people have been rejected on grounds which members of parliament and other reputable people in the community found insufficient?

**Mr Metcalfe**—Certainly, both the minister and the department receive representations from members of parliament about visa refusal decisions and a range of other issues and, as you would be aware, Dr Theophanous, those representations are taken into account in making decisions.

**Dr THEOPHANOUS**—You say they are taken into account but why are there so many protests about the decisions?

**Mr Metcalfe**—Sometimes the support comes before a decision, sometimes the support comes after a decision. The usual situation if a protest is made is that if the applicant reappplies, then the assurances behind the particular community member making those

representations are taken into account. That does not necessarily mean that the decision will be changed.

**Dr THEOPHANOUS**—Do you think that the government of Lebanon or the government of Turkey would accept your assurances about the fact that one in two or one in three of their people who are making applications to come to Australia, for what they consider to be valid reasons, have been rejected by your officers?

**Mr Metcalfe**—It is not up to me to comment on what they may think but I am not aware—

**Dr THEOPHANOUS**—No, it is not up to you, but this inquiry is trying to determine Australia's situation at the time of the Olympics so that we do not get into a problem in relation to allegations of bias and discrimination at the time of the Olympics. You are saying in the submission to this committee that you are perfectly satisfied with the present procedures. I put it to you that the present procedures are discriminatory, not only in terms of the categories, which you might say is a government decision, but in fact in implementation. The situation that possibly could arise at the time of the Olympics is that you could find that the representatives or the governments of these countries other than the 29 may be making a fuss about their people being able to get to the Olympics because people have been rejected for the wrong reasons.

**Mr Metcalfe**—I certainly agree with you, Dr Theophanous, that the desire of people to travel to the Olympics may well place unique demands and stresses on the visa system. In the sense that the department is charged with applying regulations made by the government, it is required that there be a bona fides assessment in relation to visitor travel. I note that you have pointed, in the material that we have provided to the committee, to the rejection rate for Lebanon. But I think it is also important to ensure the record is complete by indicating that the visa noncompliance rate for people who do arrive in Australia from the Lebanon is seen as around 25 per cent. So even those people who are approved, in a quarter of all cases, seek to stay beyond the period of their initial visa.

**Dr THEOPHANOUS**—Yes, but these figures are dishonest, because you define as noncompliance anybody who has applied for a further visa. That is not noncompliance; that is a right that people have when they come to Australia.

**Mr Metcalfe**—The person having made a declaration on their application—

**Dr THEOPHANOUS**—I think that the misuse of these figures—

**CHAIR**—Dr Theophanous, can we let Mr Metcalfe finish his evidence and then you can reply. I know you are excited but perhaps we could—

**Dr THEOPHANOUS**—I am certainly very concerned, Madam Chair.

**Mr Metcalfe**—I certainly think you are dealing with a very important issue, and that is the issue of the administration of the bona fides requirement. I do not accept that the figures we presented are dishonest. What we call 'noncompliance' is quite clearly indicated on the



document. It relates to people who have indicated on the form that they will come to Australia for a particular period and then depart. The fact that they are able under the legislation to apply further is relevant but it does indicate that, having told us they are coming here for an initial visit, they then decide to stay longer, seek refugee status, or simply disappear into the community. If you like, we could certainly provide a figure for the number of people who overstay their visa and become illegal. That is a figure we can talk about as well.

Could I just make the point that, as I have said—and I am not saying this in any way gratuitously—the issue of bona fides assessments in the high risk countries for people travelling to the games will be an issue that we certainly plan to take very seriously, and we will obviously be looking at very carefully.

**Dr THEOPHANOUS**—Are you absolutely satisfied that your officers are applying the bona fides policy completely up-front and honestly?

**Mr Metcalfe**—I do not have any grounds to believe that anything other than that occurs. We work very hard to train our staff. I think you will agree—and you are very knowledgeable on these matters—that these are difficult decisions. We try to ensure that the decisions are soundly based. We do that by using extrinsic material such as evidence of the person's employment details, their motivation to return home and those sorts of issues. At the end of the day, these are judgments and we have to rely on our staff to be well trained and to exercise judgment.

**Dr THEOPHANOUS**—As you said, they are judgments, and therefore there is a significant subjective element on the part of the officers making the decision.

**Mr Metcalfe**—When anyone is making a decision, whether it is the officer or someone making representations for or on behalf of the applicant, ultimately it has to boil down to a personal view as to whether that applicant is going to abide by the conditions of their stay. What I have tried to describe is that we train staff highly, we send experienced staff overseas, we supervise them closely and, as you are aware, in relation to particular categories of visa rejections overseas where there are family members in Australia, there are review rights associated with that so there is an opportunity to seek a formal statutory review of that decision.

**Dr THEOPHANOUS**—Going back to Senator McKiernan's example of the puppeteers, obviously, that one went into the newspapers, but it is true, isn't it, that you have had a significant number of other cases where the subjective judgments of your officers have in fact been questioned by members of parliament and by key organisations, including Amnesty International and other groups?

**Mr Metcalfe**—It is true that a number of people are critical of the application for visa system. That is life.

**Dr THEOPHANOUS**—No, we are talking about specific cases, not the general question.

**Mr Metcalfe**—Certainly, there is controversy about specific cases. I think if you went back to the early days of Australian immigration, there have always been controversial immigration cases. What we try to do is to apply the law in the fairest and most objective way that we possibly can.

**Dr THEOPHANOUS**—I cannot accept that that is what is happening at the moment, from the evidence available to me, I am afraid, Mr Metcalfe. I would like, Madam Chair, the following to be provided to the committee: some indication of the actual advice that is given to officers in relation to the judgment of visitors visas and some indication of the bona fides arrangements that are made. I do not want to give the department a huge task, but I would also like some indication of the number of protests that have been received from community organisations in relation to the implementation of the visitors visa program in relation to those countries outside the 29.

**Mr Metcalfe**—Certainly, we will do as much as we possibly can. I think it would be a difficult exercise, in relation to the last request, to fully comply with all aspects because those representations may be made at 30, 40 or 50 locations, given our distributed nature. But certainly, Dr Theophanous, we will attempt to provide as much information as we can.

**CHAIR**—Thank you, Mr Metcalfe. Before you leave, Dr Theophanous, is it the wish of the committee that this table handed to the committee today be accepted as an exhibit and received as evidence to the inquiry? There being no objection, it is so ordered.

**Mr Metcalfe**—Madam Chair, just on that point, we will undertake to provide an additional figure, given that the visa noncompliance rate is something that Dr Theophanous has discussed. We will tease out the specific details in relation to overstay rates for those particular countries.

**Dr THEOPHANOUS**—Yes, the categories of that would be very interesting.

**CHAIR**—As this has been raised—I have the table in front of me and I have asked for copies to be given to the rest of the committee so they can also look at it—would it be true to say, Mr Metcalfe, that there is a direct correlation between the visa noncompliance rate and the rejection rate of countries? We have discussed today the Lebanon, but would it not be true, if we looked at other countries that are listed on the table—for instance, China, Turkey and Vietnam—that the rejection rate is directly proportional to the visa noncompliance rate of those people who do come in?

**Mr Metcalfe**—I do not know if there is a direct correlation but I think there is a close correlation.

**CHAIR**—So this is actually done on the basis of experience you have of overstaying or other visa noncompliance. Again, to clarify a point that Dr Theophanous raised, when you talk about visa noncompliance, you are not including in that somebody who has been given a visa for three months with a legitimate okay to extend it to six, when they extend it to six months?

**Mr Metcalfe**—The point Dr Theophanous and I were discussing was that people, when they apply for a visitor visa to Australia, provide certain undertakings in relation to that. They provide that they will abide by the conditions of their stay.

**CHAIR**—I understand where you are going. Can you just clear up that first question of mine—that that is not included as a visa noncompliance? It is just an extension.

**Mr Metcalfe**—I think it has been included here and I think that is the point where we were having the discussion. This particular figure indicates people who have, while lawfully in Australia on their first visa, sought and been granted another visa which they were entitled to. The reason that it is included in the noncompliance rate is that, upon making their application for their first visa overseas, an undertaking is provided that the person will depart Australia within the period of their stay.

It is true that in some circumstances it is possible to apply for an extension of their stay. Those people—I think from these figures—are included in that noncompliance rate and that is why I agreed that it is important that we provide a figure as to the people who do not stay in contact with the department and overstay or perhaps seek a permanent visa when they first entered on a temporary visa or something of that nature. We are very happy to work with the committee in providing fuller details around those particular issues to get a better rate.

Madam Chair, could I take up your invitation on that point and reassert that the issue of whether particular countries have the electronic travel authority or do not have the electronic travel authority is not an issue of mere whimsy or subjectivity. The electronic travel authority was developed for, and has been extended to, our traditional tourism markets, particularly in North America, high volume parts, and well-established tourism markets from parts of Asia, as well as western Europe, on the basis of longstanding evidence that people who come from those countries come here for tourism or similar purposes and depart within their visa validity.

For that reason, we were able to move to extend by many hundreds of times the access points where they were able to obtain their permission for travel to Australia out into the IATA accredited tourist industry. At the same time we ensured that we retained border controls through the checking of the movement alert list before the ETA is granted and through questioning on passenger cards coming to Australia and, if necessary, questioning by Customs officers or Immigration officers when a person arrives at the airport. The reason that other countries are not part of the ETA scheme is because of evidence that indicates that people from those countries may not comply with the terms of their visa and therefore a more careful assessment should be undertaken. That, I think, is demonstrably able to be shown to be an objective decision and I completely reject any suggestions that there is discrimination, in the sense that some people may use it, applied to that decision.

**CHAIR**—Thank you, Mr Metcalfe. I am sure Ms May and Mr Ripoll are dying to ask some questions. Ms May, would you like to take over the questioning?

**Ms MAY**—On that point, I wonder if there is any data available, since the introduction of the ETA, compared to the traditional visa application, on overstays or customs breaches. Has that increased or decreased? Can you see any sort of movement there?

**Mr Metcalfe**—We have been studying that particular point. We are able to provide details of overstay rates by country. I think you are asking a slightly more complex question: has the pattern altered after a country has come onto the ETA? Has the overstay rate gone up, for example?

**Ms MAY**—Yes.

**Mr Metcalfe**—We have done some work on that. What I might do is take that on notice and come back to the committee and provide you with some more advice. I think the conclusion is that, if there has been any movement, it is so small as to be insignificant, but we are talking about 29 countries where the situations can be dynamic and, of course, that is an area that we are paying attention to. We have not assumed necessarily that the factors that applied at the time the ETA was provided will continue to apply, and thus we are continuing to monitor our performance. But, in terms of the specifics, I might take that on notice and come back to you with some detail.

**Ms MAY**—Thank you. If someone who is identified as an Olympic family member and can apply for an ETA did not meet the criteria, what would your department do then, keeping in mind that we want to be nice to all these people?

**Mr Metcalfe**—I think we need to just separate out the context. The Olympic family members are, of course, accredited athletes, officials, including coaches, official media and certain major sponsors and their staff as well as the IOC and national Olympic committees. The particular arrangements that we described this morning in relation to their entry will be through ETA-like processes, if the only period in which they seek to come to Australia is in the month before the games or the month after the games. They will actually be coming through what we call the special purpose visa on the basis that the application process will be directed through SOCOG and thus to us through electronic means.

If an Olympic family member, or someone who would qualify as an Olympic family member, wants to come to Australia now and if they come from one of the 29 countries, they are able to apply for an ETA, but again the visa category depends to a certain extent on the nature of their visit to Australia. If they are coming here for tourism or for other similar events, or doing business, then ETA processes may be applicable. If they are actually talking about participating in sporting events, then another visa may be applicable in that situation. The visa arrangements will vary depending upon the time a person is coming to Australia and the purpose they are coming here for.

**Ms MAY**—Thank you.

**Mr RIPOLL**—What extra efforts are we actually putting into those other than 29 countries to smooth the transition process to Australia for the Olympic Games? Are we putting in any mechanisms to try to make that a smoother transition?

**Mr Metcalfe**—We are putting in mechanisms in all countries, ETA and non-ETA, through a number of means. Through Terry Walker's efforts we have appointed one of our officers in each of our posts—and we are represented in about 50 posts overseas—to be a designated contact in relation to Olympics issues, precisely to ensure that there is knowledge

in the post of Olympics matters. We update those officers, and indeed our regional staff around Australia, on forthcoming Olympic events, in particular the calendar of Olympic test events.

We have put in place arrangements to ensure that any applications from persons coming for Olympic test events are carefully considered. If there is any suggestion there may be an inclination for that person to be refused a visa on bona fide grounds, then there is an instruction for that particular application to be referred back to Canberra, in which case Mr Walker and his section would consult as appropriate with SOCOG or others to establish whether this person was a bona fide athlete, was well known and whatever, again to assist in the decision as to whether bona fide issues needed to be invoked, and acknowledging that team members at the time of the games themselves will not be subject to those sorts of arrangements; they will come through the accreditation arrangements.

We are very conscious of the need to use our presence throughout the world. We work closely with our colleagues in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to ensure that we are getting in touch with the national Olympic committees and the other sporting bodies to make them aware of the visa requirement and to carefully consider any visas that may occur. In addition, as we mentioned in our submission, we have recently appointed a very experienced officer from our Sydney office who previously managed our operations at Sydney airport to work full time on Olympic coordination issues in Sydney. He is expending several days a week physically working in SOCOG, and again we are using his work and his contacts to ensure that immigration issues are well understood and well flagged in the lead-up to the games.

**Mr RIPOLL**—In the area of education—I have had a look through your material and there is a fair bit—what extra efforts are we going to make to ensure that people actually understand what their obligations are in terms of their visa requirements?

**Mr Metcalfe**—The principal document—I think I have a copy here and I think the committee has a copy, but we can certainly provide you with copies—is the pamphlet described as a ‘must read’ for visitors to Australia. We will certainly make sure you have copies. This is something that the Olympics has brought with it and is an excellent document for anyone travelling to Australia. It is jointly put together by ourselves, Customs, Quarantine and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and has been distributed—I think we are looking at hundreds of thousands of copies worldwide. It is now in the process of being translated and, in addition, the information in this document—which covers the whole group of entry requirements for Australia, immigration, customs, quarantine—is also being posted on the Internet and, as we said earlier, that is receiving 2,500 to 3,000 hits a week.

We are very proud of that and it is a key part of our information strategy. I think I said earlier that the Australia visa requirement is well understood by the travel industry worldwide. We have had it now for 25 years in all countries and it has been in place for many years before that for many countries but, because of the fact that people may be seeking to come to Australia who have not come here before, the provision of information is a key part of the process and certainly I would hope that the committee, in its inquiry, looks

at the adequacy of these arrangements, and if you have any views as to improvements obviously we would be very happy to look at those.

**Mr RIPOLL**—I will have a quick read of it and see if there is anything in there.

**Mr Metcalfe**—Madam Chair, I understand that DIMA will be briefing the committee separately on another occasion and we are only too happy to continue the discussion on these issues if members want to look at these matters in the meantime.

**CHAIR**—Yes. I will remind members that you will have an opportunity subsequent to this, because there will be a lot of information we will gather which we will need to come back to DIMA about.

**Mr RIPOLL**—That is fine.

**Ms MAY**—I just wondered about the distribution of this throughout the world. Would it be through our own embassies throughout the world?

**Mr Walker**—Yes. It has been distributed throughout our embassies and then made available to national Olympic committees. It has also been made available to Olympic and Paralympic meetings in Sydney. It was first produced, I think, in November 1997 when the International Paralympic Committee had a general assembly meeting of all their delegates throughout the world in Sydney and we produced the document in time to make it available at that point. As Andrew said a couple of minutes ago, it is currently in English. Next month it will be available, I think, in Spanish, German and French. Eventually we hope to make it available in 12 languages and it certainly will be very widely available to people coming to Australia.

**CHAIR**—Thank you. Is it the wish of the committee that the brochure submitted by DIMA be accepted as an exhibit and be received as evidence to the inquiry? There being no objection, it is so ordered.

**Mr RIPOLL**—What I was trying to drive at was: is there a clear section or a part in this information which clearly outlines their obligations in terms of leaving the country? Is there some part of it where it actually—maybe not in those terms—stipulates more clearly what their requirements are?

**Mr Metcalfe**—In terms of departing after the games?

**Mr RIPOLL**—Yes.

**Mr Metcalfe**—Yes, I might have to look at that in more detail, but certainly the visa clearly indicates on its face that it is valid for a certain period or, in the case of an electronic travel authority, other information that is available concerning its validity, and it is well understood amongst the travelling public that there is a certain period of valid stay and that, if you do not depart or seek further stay unsuccessfully during that time, you become an illegal immigrant and you are subject to the circumstances that go with that.

**CHAIR**—Just taking that point, you said it is well understood amongst the travelling public, but is it amongst people of different nationalities who—in the 29 countries again—go in and get their ETAs? Does this not sort of diminish the awareness of it? Having obtained the ETA so automatically, is it possible once they are here they are not aware that they really do have to leave under a certain time and overstay? Your statistics would show you that.

**Mr Metcalfe**—I think our statistics show that people do understand that requirement and that they do return home, and that people who have the wherewithal to purchase an international ticket, apply for a passport and travel throughout the world generally understand that their period of stay in a foreign country is limited by time and limited as to what they can do, unless they have a specific permission indicating that they can stay for a longer period or, for example, engage in work or study.

**CHAIR**—So it is not so much the knowledge of Australia's rules as just a worldwide knowledge that you just cannot move in and stay forever?

**Mr Metcalfe**—I would be surprised if too many people who are international travellers do not understand that in foreign countries you are there as a temporary guest rather than simply applying and going there forever.

**CHAIR**—According to your documents, we have got a 20 per cent take-up of the APP and APC now?

**Mr Metcalfe**—Yes. Essentially we have got a take-up of advance passenger information through the advance passenger clearance process up to the 20 per cent stage. Advance passenger processing, which is essentially the same concept but using ETA technology, is now being successfully trialled with Singapore Airlines, and we are now, as we indicate in our submission, working with airlines as to how we can extend APP to the sorts of figures we need over the next couple of years.

**CHAIR**—Which is the 60 per cent that you are looking for?

**Mr Metcalfe**—That is correct.

**CHAIR**—I could not find it, but there was, I think, in one of the submissions a little bit of doubt cast on you reaching that 60 per cent. Are you confident? How confident are you that you will reach the 60 per cent?

**Mr Metcalfe**—I think that we are as confident as we can be in that we have good relations with international airlines. We are working hard with international airlines. There is already APC in place with Qantas and a couple of other airlines, and now that we have shown that APP technology is viable we are sitting down with airlines and with others and, importantly, the Australian Customs Service, because we and Customs are partners in this particular issue, to work through the processes to get airlines to adopt the technology and to bring APP up to those standards. So it remains a target. Work needs to be done, and that is an issue that we are putting a lot of priority into at the moment.

**CHAIR**—I note that your submission says you are actually telling them about the incentives. What are the incentives?

**Mr Metcalfe**—I am sure my colleagues from Customs will be able to talk about this in some detail as well. The key incentive is that APP and advance passenger clearance generally is able to speed passengers through immigration entry requirements at the airport. One of the little-heralded facts about the visa system is that of course one of the benefits of the visa system is that we can collect the material relevant to a person's entry decision before they come to Australia so that their actual amount of time waiting to come through an immigration barrier is dramatically reduced. You do not have to get into discussions about why you are coming here and how long you are wanting to stay and what you are going to do.

**CHAIR**—I understand that, Mr Metcalfe; it is in your submission. What I was really getting at is that for the airlines themselves this is a cost that they have to bear, presumably. What is the nature of the cost? I want to get back to this: what are the disincentives? Perhaps I should have worded it that way.

**Mr Metcalfe**—APP brings with it a cost per transaction. It is essentially a cost that would need to be borne by someone associated with the travel. We are suggesting that the people who should bear the costs are the people most clearly benefiting—that is, airlines and their passengers—but we have not concluded those discussions and there is a little way to go yet. The benefit is clear. What it allows is for speedy transit through the immigration barrier and to reduce the amount of time that a person is in front of a Customs officer at the immigration barrier by a significant factor.

**CHAIR**—Again getting back to the disincentive, can you give us an idea of the costs to an airline?

**Mr Metcalfe**—The cost is not finally determined but it is in the range of up to around 30c per transaction, per passenger.

**CHAIR**—But there is an initial cost to the airline to put the system in place?

**Mr Metcalfe**—There would be. Dario might have more details about that.

**Mr Castello**—Yes. There would be costs to the airline, but it would vary from airline to airline. It really depends what sorts of systems they have, whether they are already operating, for example, APC arrangements and so on. So there is an up-front cost for the airline to bear, and we do not know the quantum of that.

**CHAIR**—What are the incentives for airlines carrying passengers to Australia where it is a very small proportion of their usual trade? Granted, that might go up just during the Olympics, but is it really worth while for those maybe two or three big airlines which have flights coming here, but not regularly, and where it is a small proportion of their whole business?



**Mr Metcalfe**—I agree that at the end of the day airlines are going to make commercial decisions as to whether it is in their interests to embrace APP technology. Clearly, the more passengers they have coming through, presumably the easier it is to bear in terms of marginal cost, but there are a number of airlines where Australia is a significant part of their business and, importantly, they are competing with other airlines where Australia is a major part of their business. So to a certain extent, if a few airlines are able to offer the benefits that APP brings with it, there may well be competitive pressures placed on others to also embrace that technology.

**CHAIR**—If it is possible, I would like the committee to be given at some later date an idea of what the set-up costs might be for an airline. We do not require dollars and cents but a ballpark figure of the sorts of costs to an airline to set that up.

**Mr Metcalfe**—We will certainly endeavour to assist. That information, of course, may vary from airline to airline.

**CHAIR**—Ballpark.

**Mr Metcalfe**—Yes. We may well not be in possession of that information.

**CHAIR**—At the moment I do not know if we are talking about \$5 or \$500,000.

**Mr Metcalfe**—It depends largely on their own systems and how their systems comply, but the price is presumably more than \$5. Whether it is less than \$500,000, I am not sure.

**CHAIR**—We have got these lucky people who have the APP or the APC and they are streamed. What happens if they get in the wrong queue? I am the worst person for getting in the wrong queue. I invariably get in the wrong queue. So they have found they are in the wrong queue. They are the ones who have not got it. They have got the old-fashioned system. Can they be processed or do they have to change queues?

**Mr Metcalfe**—Perhaps I could suggest, Madam Chair, that the questions on queuing and processing might be best answered by Customs, because they of course have the day-to-day responsibility of how people get through that barrier.

**CHAIR**—In that case I will ask Customs. They are coming up next.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—I want to just go back to the publicity campaign and draw a comparison on the expenditure on this particular campaign over three years to what was spent on the coalition's tax policies campaign of last year. I will just let the two of them stand there without any further comment. What is DIMA's share of the cost of that campaign? It is \$3 million over three years. What is your actual share?

**Mr Metcalfe**—If you will just bear with me, Senator, I think we actually refer to it in the submission.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—You do, at 7.4 on page 32. You talk about the four agencies, but you do not break it down further than that.

**Mr Metcalfe**—I think I might take that on notice, Senator.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—I notice that \$2.3 million has got to be absorbed between the four agencies. I want to know where that absorption is coming from.

**Mr Metcalfe**—From which financial years or from which agency?

**Senator McKIERNAN**—From which financial years and from which programs within the department. Obviously there have been cutbacks in budget figures to departments and you have got the efficiency dividend and so forth. You have got a decline in budget, yet you have been hit additionally, so I want to know where that—

**Mr Metcalfe**—I will come back to you.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Thank you very much. What is the expectation for the issue of special business visas?

**Mr Rizvi**—That is the short-term business visas?

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Short term, yes. It is mentioned that there may be extra business visas issued during the games.

**Mr Rizvi**—We would not have specific estimates of that, Senator. I suspect it probably would be a subset of the additional visitors entering Australia estimated by the Tourism Forecasting Council. It would probably be a subset of the increase that they are forecasting.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—You have got no expectation or understanding as to what it might be? It is mentioned at 2.17 in the submission that:

Business visitors arriving at the invitation of the Australian Government will also expect to be included in this category.

There is no estimate of the figures that might fall into this particular category, is there?

**Mr Rizvi**—No, we have no specific estimates broken down between business visitors and other visitors. Indeed, often people combine the two.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—It is quite a useful thing to do, too. At page 37, 9.2, you mention:

SOCOG has therefore sponsored and employed a small number of people from overseas.

How many and what was the classification of these people?

**Mr Metcalfe**—We will come back to you on that.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Thank you. This matter is probably appropriate for Foreign Affairs, but I will just mention it now. You mentioned Palestine and Taiwan. Have you got anything further on that?

**Mr Metcalfe**—No, I think that advice was directly provided to us from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Senator, so perhaps they might be best able to answer that.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—I just want to come back to my opening questions. I notice at 5.21 that you talk about entering into an MOU with SOCOG detailing entry and accreditation. I am surprised that it has not happened so far, bearing in mind what has been said about the commitment given in 1992 by the then minister.

**Mr Metcalfe**—The MOU is at a very advanced stage, but effectively what we were waiting on was the completion of the head MOU between the Commonwealth government and the New South Wales government which took place at the beginning of this year. What that has achieved is that individual agencies are now able to finalise their own MOUs. The fact that it is not absolutely finalised and signed does not mean that a great deal of work has not already occurred and obviously will continue to occur.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Going back to rule 65 and the commitment then given, my reading of what the department is saying is that Australia would not have the right to refuse any person who is selected to compete in the games. Am I correct in that assumption?

**Mr Metcalfe**—I think it is probably worth while if I just read in a couple of the key sentences from Minister Hand's letter of that time because that is very much how we have based our arrangements since then. The specific advice was:

I am pleased to confirm that Australia will comply with rule 65. Compliance with rule 65 is of course on the understanding that strict controls will be exercised over the issue of the Olympic identity cards and that the document will evidence unrestricted right of return to the holder's home country. As the normal requirement for entry visas will not apply to holders of the Olympic identity card, their entry will be more readily facilitated. If a detailed notice of issue could be supplied to my department . . .

I will just stop the quote there and comment that what that has turned out to be is the technological processes that we are now employing at SOCOG. Continuing the quote:

My Department may also need to apply certain checking procedures and request additional identification documentation overseas and in Australia as may be necessary in the light of control and security requirements prevailing at that time. I am sure you will appreciate the need for these conditions.

That letter, I understand, formed part of Australia and Sydney's bid document, and has been accepted as the basis on which immigration facilitation will occur.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Is it possible to get that complete letter?

**Mr Metcalfe**—I would think so. It is of course a document of a previous minister, but subject to any protocols associated with that we will do our best to make it available.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—I understand that. This is my final question—the matter of the media and the accredited versus non-accredited: the way I am reading this submission is that the accredited are seen to be part of the official Olympic family.

**Mr Metcalfe**—That is correct.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Are you putting special arrangements in place to handle the non-accredited media, the individual freelance journo who decides he/she wants to come to the games because of their possible influence in their home countries?

**Mr Metcalfe**—That is a very good point, and that is in fact the case. We have identified that there is a special need in relation to the unaccredited media who will not be identified through the accreditation process. They are, of course, a particularly important group of people, given their ability to influence opinion, and much of our information strategy and our visa processing arrangements will be directed to ensuring that we are able to assist their travel to Australia as much as we possibly can. That is possibly easier said than done. Unless they self-identify or otherwise describe who they are, depending on when they come, it is not necessarily an easy task. So I think that brings us back to our principal proposition that it is important for all people coming to Australia that we work to ensure that their entry is as smooth and seamless as possible, while at the same time maintaining our border security arrangements.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—That was not my final question. I think I forgot when I was asking the question about the publicity campaign earlier to ask you to detail how that split-up of additional budget funding, \$700,000 over two years, is going to occur?

**Mr Metcalfe**—We will also take that on notice, Senator.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—That shows a real commitment, I must say, in measuring it in dollar terms to what we are about to engage in, and if things go dreadfully wrong I suppose we will have 700,000 reasons at least to say why they have gone wrong. It is a pitiful figure, in my opinion. I do not expect you, Mr Metcalfe, or any of your colleagues, to comment on that particular comment. You will take it on notice, though, won't you?

**Mr Metcalfe**—We will.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Thank you.

**CHAIR**—Have you got a date for the MOU to be finalised?

**Mr Metcalfe**—We do not have a firm date, Madam Chair. We are working with SOCOG.

**CHAIR**—Best guess?

**Mr Metcalfe**—Best guess: in the next couple of months. But if I can get a more detailed answer for you I will provide that to you.

**CHAIR**—And we will be able to get a copy when that is signed?

**Mr Metcalfe**—I think it will be a public document, but I will just check on that as well.

**Ms MAY**—Do we expect many charter flights, and how will they be dealt with? If they are coming from one of our 29 countries under the ETA system or if they are coming from any countries outside the ETA system, how will they be dealt with?

**Mr Castello**—Charter flights are handled in the normal course of events now. Permission to enter Australia, which is required for anyone coming to Australia, is independent of how they travel. In other words, they can come by charter flight but they will need to have visas or ETAs or special purpose visas. Presumably a lot of the foreign Olympic teams will in fact travel on charters.

**Ms MAY**—They will come on charter flights.

**Mr Castello**—Yes. So that does not really present a challenge to us.

**Mr RIPOLL**—Mr Metcalfe, does your department have any data on previous international events, where we have significant numbers of visitors to Australia, on overstay rates and departure rates? Do we have any information on that?

**Mr Metcalfe**—Mr Ripoll, I might take that on notice because it would be interesting to see, for example, if a study or evaluation was done of the 1982 Commonwealth Games.

**Mr RIPOLL**—Yes, I was thinking of several events—the 1988 World Expo. There have been several large events.

**Mr Metcalfe**—There have been several large events which obviously are not on the scale of the Olympics. But I think it is fair to say that our capacity to collect data in 1999 is far better than it may have been 10 or 15 years ago; so, subject to that caveat, if there is any experience, whether it is anecdotal or whether it is statistical, we will provide that to you.

**Mr RIPOLL**—Yes. I would be particularly interested in visa applications in terms of people who overstayed or any other sort of particular and what countries they were from.

**Mr Metcalfe**—Yes. These events happen at a particular point in time, but at the same point in time many thousands of people continue to come and leave Australia because they are just coming and leaving. So it is always going to be difficult to disaggregate people who may have come for that purpose as opposed to having simply come at that time. But I will certainly undertake to look back through the material we may have and see if there is anything we can provide the committee.

**CHAIR**—Thank you very much. Thank you for appearing before us today. You will get a transcript of the hearing, and if there are any corrections you would like made, if you think it is inaccurate, let us know. We look forward to seeing you again towards the end of the inquiry when we can come back with a lot of hard questions—today has been relatively easy—on the basis of what we learn from other people who submit to us. Thank you very much for coming.

**Proceedings suspended from 10.25 a.m. to 10.35 a.m.**

**DOYLE, Mrs Patricia Mary, Director, Passenger Processing, Australian Customs Service**

**JONES, Mr Leslie George, National Director, Border, Australian Customs Service**

**ROCHE, Mr Michael John, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Australian Customs Service**

**CHAIR**—I now welcome the Australian Customs Service to give evidence. As you would know, although the committee does not require you to take an oath today, you are under the rules of parliament and giving false or misleading evidence is regarded as a contempt of parliament. First of all, are there any amendments you would like to make to your submission?

**Mr Roche**—There are a number of minor amendments which I propose that Mrs Doyle might pass to the committee secretary at a later stage. There are a couple of minor typographical errors and an adjustment to the implementation date for PACE—a few minor things like that—but, if you are happy, I can have that passed to the committee secretary in writing.

**CHAIR**—Yes.

Resolved (on motion by **Senator McKiernan**):

That the amendments to the submission be accepted.

**CHAIR**—Before we go into questions on your submission would you like to make an opening address to the committee?

**Mr Roche**—No, Madam Chair.

**CHAIR**—You have caught me totally unawares.

**Mr Roche**—Sorry about that.

**CHAIR**—You were here, I think, during the last part of the DIMA questioning.

**Mr Roche**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—One of the last questions I asked was what happened to people who get in the wrong queue. If they have their APP or APC and they drift over to the queue that did not require that, can they be handled at that module?

**Mr Roche**—Primary module. Yes, they can. We will be doing our best to ensure that people are in the right queue. We use snake queuing at Sydney airport and we do have queue marshals, particularly when it is very busy there. We will be doing our best to ensure that people are in the right queue, but if by chance they end up in the wrong queue and get

to the head of the queue and they are a non-APC passenger in an APC queue we will process them.

**CHAIR**—As you are actually hoping to have 60 per cent compliance with the APP and APC by the Olympic Games, and taken that we have quicker processing, as a plane unloads, you would expect the queue for people with that to be longer than the queue for people without that?

**Mr Roche**—That is one of the amendments we have made to the submission. The current take-up rate for APC is around 22 per cent nationally and 25 per cent at Sydney. For incoming passengers it is quite a bit lower than for outgoing passengers, but that is a different issue. What has happened and what has changed since the submission was put to the committee is that we have improved our processing cycles and we are now achieving, at Sydney airport, on average between 35 and 40 seconds processing per passenger. Extrapolated to the 60 fully staffed inwards modules that we have available, that produces 6,000 inward passengers an hour. We are already at our Olympic processing rate with an APC take-up rate of only 22 per cent. Any improvement we can get on that will obviously further improve us and provide a bigger safety margin over the anticipated loads.

**CHAIR**—Do I understand you to be saying then that even if we do not get a further take-up—say, we have the maximum that we are going to do and we will stay at that 22 per cent—we could handle the expected volume of visitors and athletes, the Olympic family, for the games?

**Mr Roche**—Yes. The current estimate of likely arrival throughput peaks in Sydney airport is, I think, 5,770 per hour. We believe we can achieve 6,000 an hour at the moment on our current processing rates—that is assuming 35-second cycle times—and we are hitting that during the peaks now. I think what will happen by the time of the games is that the APC rate might not increase that much, but what we are hoping is that the advance passenger processing rate will increase. That was part of the discussion you were having earlier with DIMA. We would obviously like to have a bigger buffer over the anticipated inwards passenger load, but we have a small buffer right now.

**CHAIR**—What would be the percentage improvement if you got, say, to the aimed 60 per cent?

**Mr Roche**—It is pretty significant. Those average figures of 35 to 40 seconds cover up a processing rate of non-APC, non-APP passengers of approximately 50 seconds, maybe a little higher, and a peak APC processing rate of about 25 seconds, I think. The more we can shift into the 25-second zone—

**CHAIR**—The better it is going to be.

**Mr Roche**—The size of the improvement is pretty dramatic.

**CHAIR**—How many large international passenger aircraft do you see arriving simultaneously? What would be the maximum?

**Mr Jones**—I do not have the number of planes, but the scheduling rules for Sydney airport talk about the number of seats per hour that are able to be deposited at Sydney airport. It is less than 6,000 an hour, fortunately. With the refurbishment and rebuilding of the Sydney terminal it is possible that they may have scheduling rules that could allow anything up to 5,500 seats per hour scheduled into Sydney airport. What we are looking to do is stay ahead of that in terms of our own ability to process those people through within the time frames that we are committed to.

**CHAIR**—You have the heaviest arrivals in the early morning and you have the planes coming in and taking up their positions and you have this steady stream that you are talking about. Let us say you are the third plane in and you are the last passenger off that third plane: how long would you see as a maximum wait for that passenger before they actually get through the whole system and out into the terminal?

**Mr Jones**—Our objective is to clear 95 per cent of people through the entry control point in no more than 30 minutes from their disembarkation from the aircraft. With APC and APP passengers—and you were asking earlier about what is the incentive for the airlines to move in this direction—the incentive is a commitment from us that, for those people for whom we receive advance passenger data, their passengers will get through the entry control point in no more than 15 minutes.

**Mr Roche**—Or half the processing time. The 30-minute objective is based on the actual arrival at the processing area. At Sydney airport there is an allowance of, I think, 10 minutes to get from the aircraft through inwards duty free, if that is what people are doing, to the entry control point. We measure 10 minutes from what we call ‘chocks’, which is the time the aircraft is actually parked at the terminal, and then our objective is 30 minutes from that point to process 95 per cent of passengers. Realistically, based on our current experience, at peak times people can have to wait when you get a number of off-schedule arrivals and that sort of thing.

**Mr Jones**—In the worst case it could be an hour.

**Mr Roche**—Yes, it could be an hour.

**Mr Jones**—But, generally speaking, we would expect no-one to queue for more than 30 minutes.

**CHAIR**—The worst case is an hour. If you are one of those people stuck in that worst case scenario, you are not going to be very happy when you get out of the terminal, are you?

**Mr Roche**—No. But we do not necessarily have control over the environment. If aircraft come in on schedule, then we generally can meet our standards; it is when aircraft do not come in on schedule and they bank up that we are in difficulty.

**CHAIR**—But how much is out of schedule? Obviously all aircraft have to deal with wind factors and things like that, and delays in departure from their own airports.

**Mr Jones**—Yes. A very significant number of aircraft arrive off-schedule.



**CHAIR**—And so we really do have a large potential for people to be coming in and waiting up to an hour?

**Mr Roche**—No, I did not say that at all, Madam Chair. I guess I was trying to be completely frank with you. It is unusual that people have to wait for anything like that time. I was giving you a worst case example. We would not be planning at all on people waiting for anything like an hour. Our objective is 95 per cent in 30 minutes. At Sydney airport, on average we are within—what?—half of that?

**Mr Jones**—We are better than achieving that.

**Mr Roche**—We are better than achieving that. So there are some circumstances—and it might be where a significant number of 747s arrive virtually within minutes of each other—with no previous processing occurring where there might be a delay.

**CHAIR**—The ETA will not make any difference to processing time, will it?

**Mr Roche**—The ETA does not make any difference.

**CHAIR**—So, if they are airlines that do not have the APC and the APP and a lot of them arrive at once, off-schedule, that is when you are going to be facing problems?

**Mr Jones**—Yes.

**Mr Roche**—But you are looking at a total system here. We do our best to plan for the unexpected, but at the same time everyone has got to play their part in getting people smoothly through the airport. I do not think it is reasonable to say that we should gear up to assume that every single other part of the system is not going to work. We make allowances for some contingencies.

**CHAIR**—But is that not what worst case scenario planning is all about? You need to know, if every damn thing goes wrong—because I am sure Murphy's Law says that when every damn thing can go wrong it will go wrong—what the situation is going to be. You are saying, if I interpret you rightly, that when every damn thing goes wrong then an hour would be your worst case scenario?

**Mr Roche**—Yes, probably.

**Mr Jones**—I would regard that as worst case. That is to get through the entry control point. I could not say how long you might wait for your luggage, because we have no control over that.

**CHAIR**—Yes, I think you mentioned in your submission, quite pointedly, that the choking point, I think you called it, is luggage retrieval.

**Mr Roche**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—And that is a combination of the terminal facilities and the airlines themselves.

**Mr Roche**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—There are an awful lot of issues that we need to discuss with you today. You would be aware also of the article in the paper about drugs and the Olympic athletes, and I am sure that somebody on the committee will raise that with you, so I will give the senator a chance to carry on the questioning at this stage.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—I want to invite Mr Roche to make a comment on that particular article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on Saturday, 13 January 1999. ‘This is a drugs raid, if that’s okay by you’ was the headline.

**Mr Roche**—Yes.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Do you have a comment?

**Mr Roche**—That was taken from the Australian Olympic Committee submission to the IOC meeting in Lausanne. It was, I think, a headline version of what the AOC said. There is no Customs agreement to that. I have written to Mr Coates. I wrote to him I think two weeks before that meeting in Lausanne when I saw a draft submission by the AOC, and I pointed out that Customs would not be undertaking not to inspect people, to give advance notice of inspections, or anything along those lines; nor would Customs be treating athletes detected carrying performance enhancing drugs any differently to anybody else carrying performance enhancing drugs.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Thank you. I am comforted by that. The article does state that it was a deal proposed between Olympic officials, the state government, police and Customs.

**Mr Roche**—Yes.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Has Customs got an involvement at that level with the AOC?

**Mr Roche**—I am not aware of a formal submission by the AOC that makes those points. There was a meeting convened by SOCOG in Sydney, I think in November last year, at which these matters were discussed. Mr Coates was going to be at the meeting but, unfortunately, was not able to be at the meeting. I made at that meeting the Customs position quite clear in that we would certainly be doing our best to cooperate with SOCOG and the Olympic movement, that we had no option but to enforce our laws, and we would be doing that.

There were a couple of requests made of us by representatives I think of the IOC, or perhaps the AOC, that if we detected an athlete with performance enhancing drugs that we would inform the Athletes Chef de Mission. We said—and I explained this to Mr Coates in my letter—that we had to have regard to section 16 of the Customs Administration Act, which imposes a secrecy obligation on us, and that we would not be involving the chef de mission unless with the athlete’s permission, and then probably only on the grounds of being an interview friend or as an interpreter, and we would not be involving the chef de mission,

or indeed any person from the team, if we suspected any complicity in the importation of the drugs, but we would certainly ensure that any athlete detected with performance enhancing drugs did have access to interpreters and assistance and so on. Indeed, under the Crimes Act there is a series of entitlements that anyone has if they are to be charged with a criminal offence.

I thought that there was in fact considerable support from the IOC representative at that meeting for customs enforcement. They were fairly pleased with the steps we explained we were taking, including training for our staff in the recognition of people who may be users of performance enhancing drugs, work that we were undertaking to see whether our ion scan equipment could detect those drugs, and work that we were undertaking to see whether our dogs could be trained to pick up performance enhancing drugs. There was from Dr Patrick Sharmash I think considerable support for those approaches. They certainly gave the impression at that meeting that they were looking to effective detection at the border of any athletes who may be carrying performance enhancing drugs.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Unfortunately, we got the news this morning of the International Olympic Committee's decisions on drugs and how to rule on it in various sports. It does not inspire confidence in that particular body, as a number of other events in recent times have destroyed confidence in that body. Is that a point for you? In the process of your response to my questions, you continually refer to performance enhancing drugs. Are you deliberately limiting your remarks to performance enhancing drugs, or are we talking drugs in the global sense? Are you including in your risk management the fact that some athletes and their supporters and family members and trainers might be being used as carriers for other illicit type drugs coming into the country? Can you assure me they will not be free to be used as carriers on the strength of the fact that there may not be inspected when they arrive here?

**Mr Roche**—Absolutely. I referred to performance enhancing drugs because they are the drugs we have been having most discussions about with SOCOG, AOC and IOC, and we are working with the Australian Sports Drug Agency. We recognise that the Olympics will be a time of increased risk for the importation of drugs, and we recognise that there may be threats to the border that emerge from a variety of directions, and those directions could include people associated with the Olympics. We will ensure that all of our defences are as effective as they can be at the time, and that will include concern about performance enhancing drugs, narcotics and other prohibited imports.

**Mr Jones**—In the context of drugs in sport, not all drugs that might be banned by sporting bodies are in fact prohibited imports. There are, I think, over 120 substances that might be banned in sport by the International Olympic Committee, yet only 30 or so of those may in fact be prohibited imports into Australia.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—What is the Customs protocol in regard to them? What are your dialogue and discussions with Australian sporting bodies and international sporting bodies to ensure that the sporting bodies' laws are not being flouted in the way that possibly has occurred in the recent past?

**Mr Roche**—As I said earlier, Senator, we are working very closely with the Sports Drug Agency and with the Therapeutic Goods Administration. Customs is responsible for the administration of the prohibited imports regulations, and that is where drugs are covered, whether they are narcotics, hallucinogenics, psychotropics, performance enhancing drugs and a range of other drugs. The responsibility for the inclusion of performance enhancing drugs in those regulations lies with the Minister for Health and Aged Care and he will request our minister to include drugs in the prohibited imports schedule. The practical way in which that is done is that the Australian Sports Drug Agency makes a request to the Therapeutic Goods Administration, who will consider that request.

Generally speaking, the principle that they are working on—and you will need to pursue this with them—is that they cannot recommend that drugs be included in the prohibited imports regulations if they are in common medical use. That would mean that any legitimate user of these drugs bringing them through the barrier would need to get a licence or a permission of some form. So there is a point at which you cannot put some so-called performance enhancing drugs into the PI regulations. Caffeine would be an example, and some of the drugs containing ephedrine, pseudoephedrine and so on, which are in fairly common use but which athletes are unable to take when in competition.

**CHAIR**—Just on that list, what about steroids? Steroids are commonly taken as medication and yet are one of the major problems.

**Mr Jones**—They are prohibited.

**Mr Roche**—Yes, steroids are prohibited—schedule 8 of the prohibited imports regulation.

**CHAIR**—What happens normally with somebody who has a medical condition and is on steroids?

**Mr Jones**—They need a permit to import those steroids which they obtain from the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

**CHAIR**—Do they know that, coming in? If you are a particularly bad asthmatic or something and you are on steroids, how are you made aware, when you get your ETA, that you need permission to bring those steroids in?

**Mr Jones**—With difficulty. There would be persons who arrive in Australia with those goods but, provided they have been prescribed by a medical practitioner, there are arrangements where we can contact the Therapeutic Goods Administration and get approval for that person to have that personal quantity for medicinal purposes to go through the border.

**CHAIR**—But they are delayed while that is sorted out?

**Mr Jones**—Yes.

**Mr Roche**—It is essentially quite common advice to travellers. I have seen it on many occasions—that if you are on any sort of medication, especially any unusual medication, it is a pretty wise precaution to carry a prescription with you, because other countries also have the equivalent of our prohibited imports regulations and some of those are quite a bit tougher than ours.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—I want to move to that onerous task you have got of chairing the publicity campaign committee and spending an additional \$700,000 over three years. I asked the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs on notice what the split-up of that money is. I am going to ask the same question of you: what has been your expenditure from the \$2.3 million over three years and the additional \$700,000 over two years? In the expenditure, from your focus, are you putting any particular emphasis on the matter we have just been talking about—the drugs, be they performance enhancing drugs or illicit?

**Mr Roche**—I am not sure that we necessarily admit to the chairmanship of that committee.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Let me draw your attention to your addendum. I am not sure when it was received—12 January perhaps—but it states:

The Campaign would be a high priority for Customs in 1999-2000 and we currently chair a sub-committee whose projects include:

- . Printing of 500,000 English language brochures for overseas distribution
- . Ensuring a revised brochure is reprinted by September 1999 for Olympic Chef De Mission meeting
- . Arranging translation . . .
- . Arranging translations to be placed on the Internet . . .

I thought that was the massive \$3 million expenditure.

**Mr Roche**—We might have to plead guilty then.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—It is a further indication of the seriousness that the government is putting to this issue, that \$2.3 million has got to be found from your own resources. I asked the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs what areas have had to absorb that cutback in their funds and I am asking you if you could provide that same information.

**Mr Roche**—Senator, I will have to take that question on notice. I do not have the details of that split-up of those additional funds. I am aware that we are involved in the development of this. I guess my only comment is that I was not aware that we chaired the subcommittee, but I will pursue that.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—You have this addendum, haven't you?

**Mr Roche**—Yes. I agree.

**CHAIR**—This is in no way implied as a criticism to you, but how come you are not aware that Customs is currently chairing a subcommittee when the activities of that subcommittee are so terribly important?

**Mr Roche**—It is a good question, Madam Chair. I think I will have to throw myself on the mercy of the committee on that one. I am certainly conscious of the committee, of the work of the committee, and I guess the simple point was that I had not appreciated that we were actually chairing it, that's all.

**Mr RIPOLL**—Has your department actually had any discussions with the Australian Olympic Committee as to how it would deal with any drugs that are found that might be prohibited performance enhancing drugs but not illegal imports into Australia?

**Mr Roche**—Yes, there has been that one meeting that I mentioned to you—I am sorry, I cannot recall the exact date but I think it was October or November last year—in Sydney, convened by SOCOG and attended by the Australian Olympic Committee, a representative of the International Olympic Committee, representatives of the New South Wales Police, the Sports Drug Agency, New South Wales Health and so on, and the question of what would happen to an athlete detected carrying performance enhancing drugs was discussed at that meeting. My response to the question was that we would treat that athlete the same way that we treat anyone detected carrying those sorts of drugs through the barrier. If the quantity is a small quantity, a personal use quantity, particularly for a first-time offence, the likely outcome would probably be confiscation, seizure of the drugs, and that was it. If the quantity is greater and there is any suggestion of trafficking, then the matter would be put to investigation and, indeed, the athlete could be arrested. There could be a variety of responses which could range from dealing with the matter on summons, arrest, seizure of the goods and so on. It depends very much on the circumstances of the case. That was the response we gave the Olympic Committee, and we did not propose to vary that.

**Mr RIPOLL**—Are you proposing to actually inform the Olympic Committee of anything that you detect coming through? Will there be a formal process or will there be some sort of agreement?

**Mr Roche**—I do not have it here, but I can provide the committee with a copy of my letter to Mr Coates which spells this out in some detail, if the committee wanted that. What we have said to the IOC and the AOC is that we are prohibited by section 16 of the Customs Administration Act from divulging information such as that to the public at large. There are some exemptions under section 16, including a recent amendment which I think has been introduced into the parliament but not yet passed which will enable us to pass information—including information on seizures of performance enhancing drugs—to organisations which have the power to receive that information in their legislation.

Specifically, what the government has in mind there is that we will be able to provide ASDA—the Australian Sports Drug Agency—with information on such seizures. I believe that the Australian Sports Commission is contemplating whether its legislation should be amended to also be able to receive such information. But the Olympic Committee or any other organisation could not receive it unless it had some sort of legal status and, within its enabling legislation, it was empowered to receive that information.

**Ms MAY**—With the increased numbers of passengers arriving at Sydney airport during the Olympics, do you see, first of all, the need for an increase in your staffing levels to cope with the extra passenger levels, particularly during those peak times? Are there part-time staff that will be trained up to a full-time level? Do you see that need arising during that period?

**Mr Roche**—We are planning on having some additional staff at the airport. We currently have over 100 part-time staff at Sydney airport. They are permanent part-time staff. But our current staffing levels at Sydney airport, for example, are around about 470 full-time equivalent staff. There are 530 to 550 staff in all. We expect that there may be up to an additional 100 staff at the airport. Not all of them will be full time. Some of the part-time staff may well work on a full-time basis. We are achieving that by diverting some staff from elsewhere in Customs. We can bring staff in from other parts of Customs. We are planning on bringing forward the recruitment of staff who would normally be recruited for the 2001 year by about 12 months so that we will have, if you like, a peak in the numbers of staff available over the time of the Olympics, and they will all be trained.

**Ms MAY**—In your submission there was consideration being given to an off-airport activity in the athletics village. Has any further thought been given to that, and why would you see there may be a need to do that?

**Mr Roche**—The discussions are continuing on that. We are not planning to do the customs departure formalities at the village, but there is consideration being given to airline check-in and baggage being checked in at the village. The check-in and baggage I think are the big constraints on clearing people through the airport. We believe we can handle, on outwards, something approaching 10,000 passengers an hour, which is I think double the estimate of likely outwards loads. So we are not seeing any congestion at the customs or immigration outwards point.

**Mr Jones**—We have looked at past Olympic Games, and the pressure point is on the day after the closing ceremony. As a consequence, we have looked at how we would cope with that sort of day, and by having the airline check-in arrangements at the Olympic Village we believe that would enable the airport to cope. As Mr Roche says, our outbound primary line will not be a problem to us, in our view.

**Ms MAY**—Thank you.

**CHAIR**—Could I go back to that worst case scenario of one hour which we examined using Murphy's Law. Was that worst case scenario on a 60 per cent APC and APP take-up or was it on less than that? We were talking about everything going wrong with unscheduled aircraft and all arriving at once from countries that did not have it, and I realised we were looking at that as a worst case scenario. But was that based on the presumption that we were going to get that 60 per cent take-up?

**Mr Roche**—No. I think on what we know now, given the processing rates that we are achieving with the current level of take-up of APC and APP, and the fact that we are already shifting our Olympic numbers, as I said earlier, any further take-up of APP—and we are expecting significant take-up; Singapore Airlines, for example, and Air New Zealand, I think,

are both committed to coming on during this year to APP—that will give us a significant buffer. The buffer we have at the moment must be a little over five per cent, I think, on the forecast maximum throughput. I think we will improve significantly on that buffer by the time of the Olympics. What that will do is reduce significantly the chances of a worst case scenario occurring.

**CHAIR**—So the one-hour wait is the worst worst case scenario that you can think of happening?

**Mr Roche**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—Even if you have a computer breakdown? You have addressed the issue of a computer breakdown in your submission.

**Mr Roche**—Yes. The new airport systems we are putting in I think are going to be a lot more resilient. They will be coming online during this year, and they will be a lot more resilient than the existing arrangements. They are capable of doing much more processing at the airport if we lose the links to Canberra and to the Immigration and Customs computers. They can process on a stand-alone basis. They can also, in the event that we lose the server at Sydney airport, use a remote server in Canberra. So there is quite a degree of redundancy in that. But if we were to totally lose the computer systems for a significant time then we would have to fall back to manual processing, manual checking of the lists, and that obviously would slow things down.

**CHAIR**—And that becomes a new worst case scenario?

**Mr Roche**—But we are concentrating at this stage on making sure that those computer systems stay up.

**CHAIR**—Computer systems have a habit of going down at the worst possible time.

**Mr Roche**—That is very true, Madam Chair, but the whole design principle of this—and it is a new system, it is a very current design—is a high level of redundancy and the ability to keep processing, even as various parts of the system are lost.

**CHAIR**—I think that is what they said about the submarine. That was unfair! On a slightly different point, Senator McKiernan pointed out to me that special duty-free concessions will be available for accredited Olympic and Paralympic family members. That is in your brochure. That ties in with a question I was going to ask on your submission, which was that Australians can be part of the problem. It is not the overseas people going through customs but Australians returning to Australia. This is from the brochure on duty-free concessions, page 13:

Duty free concessions

Special duty free concessions will be available for accredited Olympic and Paralympic Family members. These concessions will be available for accompanied and unaccompanied baggage and cargo. Information:

**Customs**—Phone +61 2 6275 6666



You even have a web site on it.

**Mr Roche**—Could I make the point that normally to access passenger concessions the goods must accompany the person at the time of their arrival into Australia.

**CHAIR**—It clearly says ‘unaccompanied’.

**Mr Roche**—Exactly. That is why it is a special provision for the Olympic facility, because it does not normally apply.

**CHAIR**—As Senator McKiernan pointed that out, I think I will give him the pleasure of taking that up. Do you want to take that up a bit further? In your actual submission you referred to Australians and you said they could actually be part of the problem. Has there been any discussion at all about changing that \$400 duty-free limit?

**Mr Jones**—Yes, there has. There has been an interdepartmental committee in recent years that has studied that figure, given that it has been in place since 1988. The only change that that interdepartmental committee recommended was to bring the level of the volume of alcohol up to what was generally an international standard of 1,125 mls. We looked at the inflation impact on the \$400 but, more importantly, we looked at whether or not that \$400 limit was having an impact on facilitation of passengers, and it was not.

Additionally, the Customs Service has introduced a by-law which indicates that if a passenger declares goods in excess of their concession, provided they declare them and the duty and tax on those excess goods is not more than \$50, then we waive that \$50. When you look at the combination of that with the \$400 limit, we are not impeding the flow of passengers at all, and that is the purpose of a duty-free concession.

**CHAIR**—I have concerns about that, because it does seem to be somewhat discriminatory. Admittedly, we are trying to facilitate the Olympic and Paralympic family in every possible way, but why do you see them needing duty-free concessions that other members of the public would not?

**Mr Roche**—If I could give one example, Madam Chair, it is quite common for athletes and Olympic teams to bring a large number of give-aways, memorabilia, badges and so on, which could readily exceed the \$400 limit. I appreciate the irony!

**Senator McKIERNAN**—You can see it applying to officials of the International Olympic Committee and the board—but the athletes themselves and the visiting media? That is another thing

**Mr Roche**—Teams do bring badges and all of this sort of thing, and there was considerable discussion as to how that might be handled. One way in which the team could handle it, I suppose, is to break up the badges and so on into lots so that each athlete carried some through. The expectation was that a bag might come through that might have it in one piece, and if it ran out to \$1,000 or something we simply did not want to have to get into the debate on how to deal with that through a customs entry. It was about facilitating that sort of thing.

**Mr Jones**—I think realistically in its bid document the Australian committee had to make certain commitments. Those commitments were endorsed by government. There will be special by-laws put into place within the customs tariff that do accord concessional entry arrangements for goods associated with the Olympic Games. So, if that is discriminatory against other Australian importers, yes, it is discriminatory.

**CHAIR**—‘Goods associated with the Olympic Games’ would be the exact wording?

**Mr Jones**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—That would be the exact wording.

**Mr Jones**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—What if an athlete walks in with a video recorder slung over one shoulder?

**Mr Jones**—A normal passenger walks in with a video recorder over his shoulder now.

**CHAIR**—There is no special concession?

**Mr Jones**—No.

**Mr Roche**—But it is not a problem. Provided it goes out with the athlete, there is no difficulty.

**CHAIR**—As a present?

**Mr Roche**—If it is a present to someone here and it is not going to be exported, then it is exactly the same in that regard.

**CHAIR**—Except they have to be identified?

**Mr Roche**—Yes, absolutely.

**CHAIR**—One final point to clarify something you said earlier to Senator McKiernan about the drugs—following up that article—you mentioned you were training dogs to detect performance enhancing drugs. Have you had any success?

**Mr Roche**—We have made a study as to whether that can be done.

**Mr Jones**—The indications are at this stage that it would not be in our interest to try to cross-train our dogs with too broad a range of substances that they might seek to detect. We have, however, explored further the feasibility of our ion scan technology, which is a particle analyser, and the indications are very promising there that we will be able to program those ion scan machines for a range of performance enhancing drugs. It is an electronic artificial sniffer, if I can call it that.

**CHAIR**—And your usual practice—and tell me if I am wrong—would not be to examine the baggage of any athlete or anyone else, for that matter, unless you had had prior information that that person was likely to be carrying prohibited substances?

**Mr Jones**—Not necessarily prior information. We operate on a risk management basis where we take into account any information that might be known about an individual, but then we also do a very broad range of risk management in the context of profiling or trying to draw an identikit picture, if you like, of what does a suspect look like, what are the elements that might cause us to be concerned about a person in relation to the sorts of answers they give us to questions, the route that they might have taken to Australia—something that might indicate that they may be of concern to Customs. It does not necessarily have to be specific information about the person.

**CHAIR**—So would an athlete coming through who fits that profile have his or her bags searched on the same basis as anybody else?

**Mr Jones**—Absolutely.

**CHAIR**—And the question of publicity? You did go into that.

**Mr Roche**—We do not publicise seizures at the airport unless the matter goes to a court case where it is in the public domain, but if we intercept somebody at the airport and make a seizure we simply cannot go public and release their name. We are prohibited from doing that.

**CHAIR**—Refresh my memory. What happened about the Chinese athlete? Did they go to court?

**Mr Jones**—We did not disclose information about the Chinese athlete. Other people who were in the passenger hall at the time, other passengers who witnessed that person being apprehended by Customs, notified the media, to the point where when the Chinese swimmer exited the passenger hall the media were there.

**CHAIR**—That was a fairly quick information pass-on.

**Mr Jones**—It certainly was. The only information that we formally disclosed in that context, after seeking legal advice, was to provide the results of the analysis of what we had seized to I think it was the Australian Sports Commission at that time in the knowledge that they would pass that information to FINA.

**CHAIR**—And it is permissible under your charter to do that?

**Mr Jones**—Our lawyers at the time felt that it was, provided we did not disclose anything other than the result of the analysis. We did not disclose the person. We have never confirmed the person's identity or any other circumstances. We disclosed the result of the analysis only.

**CHAIR**—If a similar thing were to happen at the Olympics, would there be a similar scenario, because obviously the hall is going to be filled with other passengers?

**Mr Roche**—I imagine that it is possible. Assuming that the current legislation goes through, what would happen is that we would be able to provide the information on the goods that were seized and the identity of the athlete, or indeed any person from whom they were seized, to the Australian Sports Drug Agency, and they would use that to inform their testing program.

**CHAIR**—There are no special procedures in place to shield any of this from the waiting public so, if it does happen, everybody can notice what is happening?

**Mr Jones**—No, there are not any. The only shielding that we do undertake at airports is if we want to do a frisk search of someone. They get the option of having that done in private as distinct from at the baggage examination area. In terms of the infrastructure at airports, we now are trying to segregate the examination areas away from the areas where people who are not being examined can exit, so only people who are subject to examination are in that particular area. If you have come through Sydney airport versus, say, Cairns, you would notice the difference. At Sydney airport your green channel exits are right in the middle of the examination area whereas at Cairns airport, or Brisbane even, you would have to deviate to go into the examination area. If you are a green line passenger, you are straight out the door without observing those sort of things.

**Mr RIPOLL**—In your submission under ‘Legal Regime’, it says:

Customs is actively seeking airlines to participate in schemes that provide advance passenger information . . .

How many airlines are actually on board with that scheme?

**Mr Jones**—At the moment, only two in relation to providing us with advance passenger data, with a trial with a third airline—that is, Singapore Airlines—and with a commitment from Air New Zealand that they will be coming on board with that scheme. That gives us access to the advance passenger data. Picking up an issue that the chairperson asked earlier, about what benefit there is for airlines in participating in these arrangements, it goes to our service delivery ability at airports, but she was also probing what incentive there is for airlines that might have only a small proportion of their traffic coming to Australia, and I guess that is part and parcel of this issue.

The manner through which airlines give us advance passenger data is in accordance now with an international standard EDIFACT message which is agreed through the United Nations, agreed through IATA, the World Customs Organisation, et cetera. So what they are doing for Australia is no different from what they might do for other countries who wish to get into these sorts of arrangements, and I think that is where the Americans, for example, are seeking a lot more advance passenger data.

Also, it now goes through the IATA network, which is an international airline network, so there are little special things that people would have to do for Australia that they would not otherwise do for other countries in this regard. We have had discussions with United,

with British Airways, with a number of companies, trying to encourage them to adopt these arrangements.

**Mr RIPOLL**—Are you expecting them all to take those arrangements on board?

**Mr Jones**—Our Immigration colleagues mentioned that we were in concert with them in negotiating with airlines, and we are trying to develop arrangements with airlines that would induce them to come on board by giving them some return in terms of not only the facilitation arrangements but looking at some mitigation of the fines that they might otherwise get for carrying an unlawful citizen here.

**Mr RIPOLL**—The reason I ask that question is that under your entry documentation section it says that it is essential that you have an extensive uptake by airlines to actually be able to process this.

**Mr Roche**—That is true, but this submission now is some six months old and during that time there has been the introduction of a new single incoming passenger card, and we have undertaken a number of measures which have significantly improved our processing speed at the airport. If we were to rewrite this submission, what we would say in the light of what we know now is that increased uptake will give us a bigger buffer over the expected maximum passenger loads.

Mr Jones mentioned the incentives to the airlines. Some of the things that airlines are after from us include better processing arrangements for premium class passengers and so on, and of course we will tie any of those sorts of improvements to the provision of electronic information for all passengers.

We are also pursuing at an international level—and this is going to be somewhat slower—the possibility that the provision of basic travel information for international passengers will become part and parcel of the airline communications system, CITA. So it strikes us that if the airlines are perfectly happy to carry around the world information that I might, for example, want a salt-free meal or a kosher meal or whatever, then perhaps they should be prepared to carry around the information on my passport number and other travel document details, so that advance passenger information can be provided as a matter of routine.

**CHAIR**—So you would be looking at people with frequent flyer cards—everything would already be there in the airlines on them.

**Mr Roche**—Yes. It is not going to happen in time for the Olympics, it is a very long-term program, but we would like to see in the long run that the basic passenger identification within the standard passenger message would contain a travel document and personal ID that goes beyond what it does at the moment, sufficient for us to identify the traveller.

**Mr Jones**—The philosophy is that if we can access maximum information whilst the aircraft is in the air, we can make risk management decisions before the aircraft arrives and as a consequence deliver a better clearance rate on arrival of that person. If you take the contrary situation, where we have to wait until the person presents in front of us before we

can obtain any information about them, by viewing their passport, ticket or whatever else, it stands to reason that that is going to take us longer and cause delays. That is therefore the sort of approach we are trying to adopt: get it in advance and maximise what we can access.

**Mr Roche**—The need to do something like this is becoming more apparent as airlines move to ticketless travel internationally, because the travel document itself, the ticket, is an important part of our clearance process. It provides information on where you bought your ticket, how you paid for your ticket, where you are coming from, where you are going to. If that is not in front of us, then we need some sort of alternative information if we have any questions about a passenger. So again, for that reason, we are applying pressure internationally to see if we can get this information built into the airline systems.

**CHAIR**—You pick up somebody as they actually reach the module because then a little red light goes on: ‘Hold on, we’ve got some queries about that.’ You indicate this to an Immigration officer. The Immigration officer says, ‘Excuse me, sir, will you step this way.’ The poor guy dies of a heart attack and everything else but goes over to a different area. Is that how it is dealt with?

**Mr Jones**—It depends whether it was an immigration concern that caused us to put them on alert but, yes, that is how it works. We have a border management alert system where persons of known concern—

**CHAIR**—I was just thinking of the mechanics. So it is not as they get off the plane; they have to actually arrive at the module and that triggers—

**Mr Jones**—No, at the primary line, as you are probably aware, that primary line is manned by Customs officers acting on behalf of Immigration.

**CHAIR**—Thank you very much for appearing before us today. You will get a copy of the transcript of today’s proceedings and if there is any editing required because you believe you said something different, let us know and the alterations will be so made.

[11.34 a.m.]

**CAHILL, Mr John, National Manager, Border Programs Branch, Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service**

**HALL, Mr Craig, Olympics Liaison Officer, Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service**

**MURPHY, Mr Robert Allan, Manager, Border Surveillance, Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service**

**CHAIR**—I welcome the witnesses from AQIS. You would have heard us say earlier that, although you are not required to give evidence under oath, this is regarded as proceedings of the parliament of Australia, and any misleading information would be regarded as contempt of parliament. Are there any amendments or additions you would like to make to your submission?

**Mr Cahill**—No, Madam Chair. We wrote to the committee on 13 January 1999 to make a couple of minor amendments in relation to the name of our department and the projected numbers which were contained in our submission which continue to evolve over time, but other than that there are no further amendments that we wish to make at this stage.

**CHAIR**—Do you have an opening statement that you would like to make today?

**Mr Cahill**—No, I do not.

**CHAIR**—Let me start by asking a general question. What do you as an organisation see as your main problems with the Olympics that you would not see normally, either in volume or in different types of problems?

**Mr Cahill**—Most of the problems that are likely to be encountered by AQIS during the Olympic period are issues that we regularly deal with from time to time, so the major difference is going to be one of volume and the resources we need to deal with that. That is principally in terms of passenger numbers and the processing of those passengers and issues to do with the number of horses, in particular, coming into Australia. But I guess the area of greatest sensitivity and challenge for us, in terms of how we manage it, is the food that may come into the country through the number of cruise liners coming in, the number of yachts that are arriving and the hospitality houses that will be run during the course of the Olympics. That probably represents the greatest challenge for us.

**CHAIR**—I know Ms May wants to ask you about horses, so if I could follow up a little bit about food. You specifically mentioned the liners, the yachts, and I will get to that later. But first of all, what about the athletes having special requirements for food and bringing that food with them? Is that likely to be a problem at all?

**Mr Cahill**—It depends on the nature of the product. We will be relying heavily on the visitor information campaign we are running in advance, the general public awareness we are running in advance, the arrangements we have in place with SOCOG and the information

that is provided to athletes and others through that process. We are not intending to change in terms of the kinds of things people are able to bring into Australia. We are not intending to change the nature of those arrangements. We might change the way in which we manage that for the Olympic period, but not changing the products per se.

**CHAIR**—Have you made inquiries as to whether or not Olympic athletes are likely to have specific diets and to be bringing specific foods with them which would be against our regulations?

**Mr Murphy**—You have to remember that 7½ million people come into the country each year, and we are talking here about something like 230,000 people specifically for the Olympics. We are not foreseeing anything unusual that we do not already see now. We have regimes in place where we manage the unusual; people typically have to apply for permits to bring it into the country. Assessments are made against those products and they are either granted a permit or not.

**CHAIR**—Can I put to you, Mr Murphy, that athletes—I do not know how many high level athletes you know—tend to get a little strange, from our standards, as to what they will and will not eat. They do go on really specific diets that you would not find in your normal passenger load. I would suggest that it would be a worthwhile inquiry to see whether any athletes are going to be carrying foodstuffs which they believe they require in their normal daily diets for their performance, because otherwise I can see we could get to a situation where they could arrive with this food—which they believe either psychologically or for whatever other reason they require—fill out the form that they are carrying it and then get to Customs and find that you are about to take it from them, with the psychological problems that that is going to cause and all the discomfort to everybody concerned.

**Mr Murphy**—Again, a lot of these athletes are going to come into the country not just immediately prior to the Olympics but, in many cases, weeks or even months before. Nearly all of our staff are now professionally qualified at the airports and they see a vast range of material now. I would think that the majority of material will be able to be handled on the day. We are providing specific training for our staff on how they handle themselves in what might be difficult circumstances. As John said, we will try and make them as aware as possible of what the Australian import requirements are. We will probably look at the issue through our publicity programs, specifically through SOCOG, to try and get a better handle on that sort of issue. But we are not really proposing to change what currently are fairly strict import requirements.

**CHAIR**—It would be advisable, do you think, to make sure this does not arise by making it clear to the athletes and for you perhaps to inquire if this is likely to be a problem.

**Mr Cahill**—I understand the point you are making and that is certainly something we will do. We do get athletes coming into Australia now with special dietary requirements and we basically manage that. Again, it is a question of how you manage the magnitude of the problem on the day, but it is not going to be a problem that is going to hit us all at once. It is going to be a progressive thing as these people arrive in Australia over a number of weeks, and perhaps months, before. I understand the point you are making.



**CHAIR**—Hopefully, it will not be a problem because you will have solved it before it happens.

**Mr Cahill**—Exactly.

**Ms MAY**—In relation to quarantine regarding horses participating in the Olympics, what is the lead-up time? How long do they come in before the Olympics actually start? What arrangements have we in place as far as quarantine goes?

**Mr Cahill**—We are developing with SOCOG a specific memorandum of understanding to deal with equestrian matters. That has not yet been finalised so we are still working through the detail of that, but it is probably fairly close. We have participated actively with the relevant authorities in the planning for the Horsley Park equestrian centre which will be basically a quarantine station for the duration of the Olympics and prior to that. It is expected that most of the horses will be arriving on SOCOG sponsored flights several days prior to the commencement of their formal two weeks onshore post-entry quarantine period. That will be served at Horsley Park just prior to the games. The horses will basically be confined to Horsley Park for the time they are in Australia. As I said, it will be gazetted as a temporary animal quarantine station for the duration of that period for that purpose.

AQIS veterinarians will be present to inspect the horses and their documentation on their arrival to make sure they have the appropriate clearances, medically and otherwise. They will continue to be closely supervised by AQIS vets and quarantine officers. Entry to the site will be restricted during the period of training that the horses are undertaking. As I said, most of the horses are expected to arrive on SOCOG sponsored flights so we will have specific arrangements in place for those horses, but to the extent that any arrive by other methods they will be subjected to the normal quarantine arrangements we already have in place, particularly using the animal quarantine station at Eastern Creek. Eastern Creek will be kept free of horses during the quarantine period so that if any issue arises we will have that facility available to use as well.

**Ms MAY**—On another point, too, there will be a lot of special cargo, I assume, coming in, with boats and even wheelchairs for the Paralympics. Are there special arrangements put into place to get that cargo through as well? They would have to be inspected, I would imagine.

**Mr Cahill**—We are putting those arrangements into place and we are also going through a process of learning from events that occurred prior to the Olympics. For example, the world yachting championships were recently held in Melbourne and there were some lessons to be learnt through that process in terms of how we deal with those numbers of yachts, the packing, the bicycles, the dirt and so on which is associated with all of that—the risk of timber pests and whether things have been properly fumigated and so on. Those matters will be subject to specific arrangements which we will put in place before the Olympics.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Is the video mentioned on page 12 of your submission dealing solely with quarantine matters?

**Mr Murphy**—No. The video is a joint initiative between Customs, Immigration and Quarantine. Like the brochure I see you have, and other initiatives with the web site, it is a joint initiative through all the border agencies.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—The video will deal with issues of immigration and border control.

**Mr Murphy**—We are currently calling tenders for that video and they are to be finalised next week, and all agencies are involved through a committee on the public awareness issues. For instance, the Australian Customs Service had primary responsibility for putting together that particular pamphlet you have. Immigration had lead carriage on putting together the web site. AQIS is putting together the video and some of the in-flight publicity material. All the agencies are working together through a committee, which is chaired by PM&C, to ensure all these issues are coordinated and all the professionals in the organisations are making the contributions, with each of them having a particular lead on parts of those initiatives.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—\$50,000 does not seem to be a lot of money for the production of any form of video. Will it involve actors or is it schematic, diagrammatic or slides? What production—

**Mr Murphy**—I am not across the sort of detail but, if you like, we can provide you with a copy of the tender documents that will probably give you a better idea of the specifics.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Providing they are not too detailed—maybe an overview of the tender document. Just explain what type of video it is. I am surprised you mention the tendering is only closing next week. There are 500 and something days to the Olympics. All this happens a month before it really builds up?

**Mr Murphy**—The tender closes next week and we are expecting the video to be available in June-July this year, which is still 14 or 15 months before the Olympics, and that will be distributed from there.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—I am surprised it is not in place at the moment, considering there was \$3 million to play with on this matter, which included the absorption of \$2.3 million from the funds of the individual departments. How much absorption did Quarantine have to bear? It is not mentioned in your submission.

**Mr Cahill**—We have been provided with specific funding over two years for our part of the visitor information campaign. In addition to that, AQIS, as you are probably aware, received significant additional resources as a result of the Nairn committee review of quarantine arrangements. A part of that was significant additional funding for public awareness and we are therefore using our quarantine matters campaign as a way of improving awareness not just generally of quarantine matters, but also specifically leading up to the Olympics.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—I was not actually fully aware of Nairn. I will probably find out more about it during the Senate estimates process next week. The department of

immigration, in their submission to us at 7.4, talked about the campaign costing \$3 million. It talked about DIMA, ACS, AQIS and DFAT being required to absorb costs of some \$2.3 million in that period. That is what my question was leading specifically to: your actual, precise monetary contribution to this particular \$3 million campaign over three years.

**Mr Cahill**—We have been provided with additional budget funding of \$272,000 over two years.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—You have told us about that in the submission at page 12.

**Mr Cahill**—Yes.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—What have you had to absorb?

**Mr Cahill**—We expect the \$272,000 will cover our specific additional requirements for the Olympics. To the extent that we judge an additional part of the awareness program is required to be directed towards Olympic matters, we will pick that up as part of the quarantine matters campaign. In terms of what we are absorbing and what we are not, I am not able to quantify the element of that which you can attribute specifically to the Olympics.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—I have a problem now. I am not going to accuse you of being evasive. After the previous set of witnesses, when we pointed out from their submission that they were actually chairing the committee, managing things, you—in the earlier part of your evidence—mentioned that the campaign is actually being conducted by PM&C.

**Mr Cahill**—Our understanding is that the committee referred to—and I have not heard all of the earlier evidence—is the group of officials on the Olympics. That is chaired by PM&C. There is a subcommittee under that that deals with the visitor information campaign, so I assume that is what is being referred to.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Thank you for that clarification. I recalled myself, as you were responding, that it was mentioned it was a subcommittee rather than it being the committee. I really am anxious to chase this \$3 million down. I said earlier that it is a pittance, in my opinion, and if we do have huge problems as a result of this, post-Olympics, the reason will be because there have been no resources allocated to it. I appreciate Quarantine is getting \$272,000, and \$50,000 of that is going to the production of a video. Will that be an English language production?

**Mr Murphy**—It is envisaged that the video will be in a number of languages—English, French. It will be in four or five languages.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Any Asian languages, to your knowledge?

**Mr Murphy**—I don't know the specific details. I spoke to our senior PR people this morning and they said that they were looking at a number of languages, and he did specifically mention French as well as English, and some others.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Is that all going to be done for \$50,000? How long is the video?

**Mr Murphy**—I do not have the specifics. As I said before, we could go back and get the tender documents which will have all that sort of detail in it.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—I am just frightened about tender documents. I have seen tender documents in the past and I do not want to be inundated with a mass of additional material which is not going to be directly of assistance to us on this particular committee. I am more than satisfied with an overview of the tender—whether it is schematic or diagrammatic. I obviously do not want to breach any business confidentiality on the way through.

**Mr Cahill**—I acknowledge that on the face of it that seems like a fairly conservative estimate for the production of the video. I would defer to our experts on that. AQIS has produced videos for use on aircraft, of fairly short duration, because you cannot keep people's attention for very long, but we are reasonably proficient in doing that already. In fact, we have just released a new version which we have sent out to the airlines within the last few weeks. I would expect this new video would build on what is already there. We did use actors for that, but it is a relatively short video of probably no more than about five minutes duration.

**Mr Murphy**—About three minutes.

**Mr Cahill**—Or three minutes.

**Mr Murphy**—But we can take this issue and come back to you with some specifics.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—To deal with quarantine matters, customs matters, the importation of drugs, group border controls, visas, migration overstays, refugee matters?

**Mr Cahill**—It is a valid point.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—When will the committee be able to look at this? We will not need to allocate a great deal of our time in order to do it, so it would appear.

**Mr Cahill**—That is right. We are not making a movie. I do not know what the tender specifications are in terms of the length of the video and so on, but we can provide you with a synopsis of that to give you a better indication.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—That was the word I was looking for earlier—'synopsis'—but I could not think of it. The advertising media schedule of \$115,000—I would think that this committee has gone close to that expenditure in advertising, only within Australia, this particular inquiry. It is not as much as that, but advertising is not cheap. We are talking about a worldwide thing. How far is \$115,000 going to go in advertising worldwide? You could surely spend that in one city in the United States on its own, with minimal impact.

**Mr Cahill**—Perhaps I can make a general point about that. Obviously, the information campaign does not rely entirely on the initiatives taken with this new funding. There has

been a progressive campaign being built over time which has taken several forms, including the booklet which the committee has already seen. There is a new version of that being printed now. That was first distributed in large numbers to all Australian overseas posts and to national Olympic and Paralympic committees in the second half of 1996. In terms of AQIS's efforts, we have also made contributions to SOCOG's freight-forwarder handbook which was published in 1997 and to the official Australian government Olympic web site which is linked to the SOCOG web site. Selected in-flight magazine advertising will appear in the lead-up to the games, and perhaps that is what the \$115,000 is likely to be most directed towards. There is the video that we have already mentioned, which has been produced in several languages.

There are, in addition to that, other efforts going on which are associated with the tourism industry and which are being undertaken through our regional offices where state government activity is also involved in promoting their areas for training and other events leading up to the Olympics, so we have plugged into web sites and so on that are associated with those activities and contributed to tourism material and so on. So there are other things in kind that we are contributing to besides the things that this money is buying.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Thanks for that, but the question still remains: how is that \$115,000 going to be spent?

**Mr Cahill**—Again, I do not have the media schedule and how that is intended to be spent, so I can provide that information to the committee.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—You are going to take that on notice. For the committee to get an overall picture of this whole campaign—and I am particularly interested in the \$3 million campaign that has been mentioned before—would it be your understanding that the best people to talk with would be PM&C as chair of the coordinating committee, or do you suggest maybe an amalgam of the four agencies appearing together? How will the committee get the overall global picture of what is happening with this \$3 million campaign? I am only talking about the campaign, not the Nairn committee initiatives that you have referred to in your particular agency.

**Mr Cahill**—If the situation is as I explained to the committee previously in terms of the subcommittee that we are referring to and the chairing of those arrangements, I guess PM&C would be the appropriate people to ask about that. But, again, I am happy to take that on notice and give the committee some further advice about that.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—If you would, thank you very much, Mr Cahill.

**CHAIR**—In your opening remarks you referred to food coming in aboard ships and yachts. Obviously, we are not allowed to bring in food. Your concern is that food would be carried off the yachts and the ships?

**Mr Cahill**—There are three primary areas of concern. One is the stores that the ships themselves hold and the source of the food and other items that they are bringing in.

**CHAIR**—For instance, there could be cockroaches in it?

**Mr Cahill**—There could be some kind of infestation that we would be concerned about.

**CHAIR**—Does that include cockroaches?

**Mr Cahill**—I do not know whether cockroaches are a prohibited import.

**Mr Murphy**—With the food on board, we are essentially working with the New South Wales Health Department on the public health aspects of that sort of food, which may well include things like cockroaches. So we are going to be coordinating the inspection of these vessels with New South Wales Health so we basically only go once. The staff who go to that will be basically looking at issues of quarantine concern, which will be obviously typically insects, plus also the public health concerns on some of these cruise vessels.

**Mr Cahill**—So in answer to your question, we are concerned about the vessels and what they are carrying, we are concerned about the people and what they might be carrying, including off the vessels, so there is a degree of surveillance and monitoring that will be required, and we will put arrangements in place with our colleagues from Customs to have a presence on Sydney Harbour that we do not ordinarily have and in the waterways around there, and obviously with the yachts and so on we are concerned also about animals and making sure that they are kept on board.

**Mr Murphy**—The other issue is probably waste, in that these vessels are going to generate an enormous amount of waste which could be a quarantine concern.

**CHAIR**—What do you do with that? What happens to it?

**Mr Murphy**—In the case of Sydney, it currently goes to either one or two companies who either chemically treat it or heat treat it and from there it has basically the status of normal domestic waste and is basically deep buried.

**CHAIR**—Is there a problem with the smaller yachts, though? The big ships would know all this and there would be a system which they are part of and they fall into that system, but what about the smaller yachts?

**Mr Murphy**—That is a good point. They pose a risk and that is why we will be at least doubling our staffing in and around the harbour and working very closely with the Customs and state police in monitoring. But what happens on smaller yachts typically is that when they arrive in the harbour, you go to those yachts and make sure their rubbish is properly disposed of, even if that means we have to take it and physically do that ourselves, and we then go through the food stores on the yacht and determine the material of quarantine concern. Either one of two things can happen—it would depend on the particular circumstances. It can be bonded on the vessel, and there are certain procedures we go through there, or it can be taken away and destroyed.

**CHAIR**—How long is the maximum time between when a yacht would moor in Sydney Harbour and when you would have a look at it, be able to examine it, discuss waste with it and things like that?

**Mr Hall**—It would depend on the circumstances, Madam Chair. If there was a bonded animal on board, then obviously our surveillance would be a lot more strict than if there was not a bonded animal on board. If we did a primary inspection of that vessel and seized a certain amount of foodstuffs, et cetera, there would not be a great deal of surveillance needed on that vessel if we had cleared that previously.

**CHAIR**—They have come in, maybe at 8 o'clock at night. The procedure is for them to notify the port authority by radio that they are there and if they do have an animal or something like that. But if they have come in and they have gone through the legal formalities at 8 o'clock at night, when would you get to see if they had waste or when would you really observe that boat?

**Mr Murphy**—The process is that 24 hours before they arrive they are required to apply for what is called pratique, which is clearance to come into the port which they need to get from us. We then log all the details into a computer system and, other than late at night, we have people to meet the vessel on arrival or pretty close to arrival. That computer system then holds all the details of the vessel, including anything that is bonded on board, any animals on board, and that system is then used by all of our staff around Australia to follow the movement of that vessel so that anyone can log on and find out if there are any problems with a specific vessel.

Obviously, sometimes small yachts arrive unannounced, not only to ourselves but to the port authority. We have a very close relationship with the port authority and with Customs, and as soon as they arrive we pretty well know. There would be cases when we would not visit a vessel until perhaps the following morning, but you would normally expect us to be there within a few hours of arrival or first thing the following morning.

**CHAIR**—So that is where your danger period is, when they might be dumping waste or anything, in that period between their arrival and when you actually locate them.

**Mr Murphy**—Remembering also that most of these small yachts are not going to first port in Sydney. They are probably going to come into Cairns and those sorts of locations where they will be cleared, the details of the vessel will be logged into our vessel monitoring system along with where they propose to go, so when they arrive in Sydney we will pretty well know the details of the vessel, whether they have been cleared, what is on board and we will be able to monitor it and our surveillance will be based very much on that sort of intelligence.

**Mr Cahill**—The probability is that most of them will not first port in Sydney, that they will come into already established arrangements that exist in other ports. That brings me to a further point. I would like to emphasise again that these are quarantine risks which we manage already every day. We are talking about the volume and the size of the thing. We will obviously be putting additional resources to the task, as we have indicated in our submission, to make sure that there are no unreasonable delays in processing people and that the quarantine risk is no greater than we would ordinarily expect on any day.

**CHAIR**—Do we still get rats on boats?

**Mr Cahill**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—Do they pose a problem? I know they do at the airports at Kuala Lumpur at the moment, but do they on the boats?

**Mr Murphy**—They do, because there still are some diseases of concern carried by rats. There is a regime whereby vessels have to have de-rat certificates which means they have to be fumigated at frequent intervals and all of that again is watched very closely by our staff. When they go to a vessel they check for things and say, ‘Have you got a valid de-rat certificate?’ If they have not, they are subject to fumigation and treatments, and all that again is watched very closely and it is part of our vessel monitoring regime.

**CHAIR**—Has the problem with Kuala Lumpur caused you any problems?

**Mr Murphy**—Not specifically, no. We are aware of it and we just handle those sorts of issues when vessels or aircraft and passengers arrive. Again, the same thing happens with aircraft. They have to apply for pratique before they arrive. They have to be disinfected. Our people are there when the holds of the aircraft are opened. I assume from there on the passengers stream on to go through the primary line. People have to fill out all those sorts of Customs quarantine declarations. Customs acts as our agent, if you like, at the primary line. AQIS deals with people essentially at the back of the hall who have been screened through those processes and through customs, and we end up with something like one million people at the back of a hall after they have been through that process. Our staff have quite specific skills. They are not mass screeners. They are fairly highly qualified individuals who deal with, if you like, particular quarantine problems as a result of that.

**CHAIR**—Do you use dogs at all?

**Mr Murphy**—We have a large number of dogs. Our dog program is much bigger than Customs’, for instance. By the time of the Olympics we will have something like 30 dogs in Sydney alone—dog teams.

**CHAIR**—What are they trained to sniff out?

**Mr Murphy**—They are trained to identify material of specific quarantine concern. I think they are trained for about 26 specific items and then not trained to react to a whole range of other things. They work around the carousels and the baggage halls and they are very effective and they give Quarantine an enormous profile in the airports. We also have other active dogs who work in the mail centres and in the courier areas, but they are not beagles. We use beagles because they present a very positive image for Quarantine and give us an enormous profile in the baggage hall. But in the mail centres, away from the public view, we have larger, more active dogs such as blue heelers and those sorts of dogs, and they screen mail.

**CHAIR**—On a busy day what would be your hit rate from your dogs?



**Mr Murphy**—That is a very difficult question to answer. If you watch the dogs work, they find things regularly. Every few minutes the dog will stop and identify an issue of concern.

**CHAIR**—Can you give us an example?

**Mr Murphy**—A passenger comes in and stands waiting for their bag. They may have a banana or a piece of fruit. The dog will identify that and is trained to sit. A dog handler, who is a Quarantine officer, will then ask the passenger for their declaration to determine whether they have declared it or not. If they have declared it, then that is okay and they are essentially going to go through the red channel; we handle that typically through that process. If they have not declared it, then we do, in a sense, start a process of corrective action, which may in fact be an on-the-spot fine which we issue at airports, or it may result in a prosecution. In that case, if they have not declared the matter, it basically then is referred to the Quarantine people back at the hall and they take it forward from there.

**CHAIR**—Thank you. We have been informed that the baggage could possibly be a choke area for the airport. Does that slow you down? Does the fact that there is a bottleneck at the luggage have an impact on you?

**Mr Cahill**—We obviously deal with the passengers after they have collected their baggage and—

**CHAIR**—But you have dogs around the baggage area.

**Mr Cahill**—We have dogs around the carousels, but those dogs are primarily concerned with the hand luggage the passengers are carrying, not the luggage coming up through the carousels. Luggage coming up through the carousels, depending upon the declaration that the passenger has made or whether they fit particular profiles that we work with in conjunction with Customs, will then be subject to further inspection at the back of the hall, either through X-ray machines and/or through physical inspection of the bags.

**CHAIR**—Those X-ray machines pick up, from their profiles, foods and things like that.

**Mr Cahill**—The X-ray machines are designed to pick up organic matter.

**CHAIR**—Thank you very much for appearing before us today. You will get a copy of the *Hansard*, and if you have any queries please get back to the committee.

**Mr Cahill**—Thank you very much.

[12.13 p.m.]

**DUNN, Ms Jean Margaret, Assistant Secretary, Overseas Promotion and Olympics Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

**TOOTH, Mr Geoffrey Peter, Director, Refugees, Immigration and Asylum, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

**WILLIAMS, Mr William Gordon, Director, Olympic and Sports Promotion, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

**CHAIR**—I now welcome witnesses from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The committee does not require you to take an oath. However, we do advise you that this is regarded as a proceeding of the parliament of Australia and any misleading evidence that you should give to us would be regarded as contempt of parliament. Are there any amendments at all you wish to make to your submission?

**Ms Dunn**—No.

**CHAIR**—Would you like to commence today by making a statement to the committee?

**Ms Dunn**—Yes, a very brief one. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade sees the Olympics as a major opportunity to promote a positive image of Australia overseas and to promote our foreign affairs and trade objectives. Our foreign affairs and trade objectives are very broad and they would include exports and tourism, for example. As a major international event, it is a unique opportunity to showcase Australia overseas. For that reason DFAT is putting a lot of effort into promoting Australia, including through the work of our posts overseas. The flip side of this is that we, of course, would want to minimise or avoid any negatives coming out of the Olympics and particularly to ensure there are no difficulties at the border for our key target groups, our influential decision makers, and key opinion makers in our overseas countries.

For that reason we are actively involved in the visitor information campaign and we are active in ensuring that arrangements are in place at the border both for the entry and exit of VIPs from overseas—government, business and the media, all of which, as I said, are our key target groups overseas in terms of their impressions of Australia.

There is another area of interest to the department in the Olympics and that is derived from the portfolio's responsibility for the handling of particularly controversial visitors. Specifically the Minister for Foreign Affairs has the discretion to exercise the granting of asylum and specifically territorial asylum.

**CHAIR**—Thank you very much.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Precisely on what will you be spending that \$132,000?

**Ms Dunn**—I will make a brief comment and then I will pass over to Billy Williams who is primarily responsible for this area in the department. Our principal payments have been

for the production of this pamphlet and its production and distribution overseas, A *'must read'* for visitors to Australia, and that is basically where our \$132,000 will go over the two financial years, including translation, updates, et cetera.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—How many copies have been produced and in what languages? What numbers in what languages?

**Mr Williams**—So far, the production has only been in English, but work is now proceeding with translation into French, German and Spanish initially, and there is a whole raft of other key languages being produced as well. The particular subcommittee that is driving this is being chaired by Customs. I am sure they have probably told you this story as well, but our main focus is on the quality of the material, the content and the effective distribution of it through our posts. As Ms Dunn said, much of that money is being used on the distribution of the material to the global network.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—How many have been produced and what numbers are envisaged for the foreign language versions?

**Mr Williams**—I am not aware of the precise numbers, because that committee chaired by Customs is doing that work. I know 100,000 copies have already been produced and distributed and smaller quantities in the target languages are being produced. I do not know the numbers for the foreign language versions.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—May I ask precisely about your \$132,000 for DFAT. Do you just put that money into the pot for the subcommittee and they spend it or do you have a precise expenditure, like the previous set of witnesses had in the production of a video for \$50,000?

**Mr Williams**—We know that we have already spent a certain amount of money on the freighting and distribution of the booklet. We have been advanced \$65,000 this year for that purpose and a certain amount of that has gone on to distribution and the balance of it will be used on our contribution to the printing which is being coordinated by Customs.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Is the fact that the first edition has been printed in the English language sending a message that the people that need the information in the main are going to be English speaking people? Is there any message in the fact that it is English speaking primarily? We have been told here this morning from other witnesses, apart from yourself, that the plans for other foreign language productions of it are mainly European languages rather than Asian languages.

**Ms Dunn**—I think it is out of recognition that there are a lot of English speaking people coming to visit Australia during the Olympics. We recognise the importance of publication in other languages too. It is just an incremental process.

**Mr Williams**—I am not sure of the extent of the other foreign language translations. I know that some Asian languages are in the plan—Chinese, for example, and the Arabic language. But I think, as Ms Dunn said, English is the predominant international language of business and travel, and I guess it is tailored to that.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—And sport?

**Mr Williams**—And sport.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Is it, or is it not French?

**Mr Williams**—I am not an expert on that. I do not know the answer to that question conclusively.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Foreign Affairs is probably the appropriate body. We get terms like ‘Chef de Mission’. We are using that term in Australia. That is a French expression, is it not? When I first heard it I thought it was to do with cooking or culinary skills. The Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs talked about a \$3 million campaign over three years and that \$700,000 in additional expenditure had been allocated over two years and that the four departments were having to absorb \$2.3 million of that. How much has Foreign Affairs had to absorb out of its already dwindling budget to finance part of that campaign?

**Ms Dunn**—A very rough estimate would be about a third to a half of an officer at the Broadband 1 level or Broadband 2 level. It will fluctuate during the year, and when the printing and distribution program gets busy maybe a BB2. So that is \$20,000 or \$30,000 for the financial year.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—And then next year the same?

**Ms Dunn**—Probably.

**Mr Williams**—I would expect as long as the program operates we will be absorbing resources of some of our staff to manage that and contribute to its success. It is quite important.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Have any decisions been made on this? As I see it, we have a very crucial subcommittee, and a detailed allocation by the budgetary process of \$3 million. Can you be a bit more precise about what you are actually doing in this and where the funds are coming from? It leads into my next question, which is: what section of the department is going to go without in order to finance this particular campaign?

**Ms Dunn**—We have in our branch a certain number of positions allocated to the Olympics and we have made a decision that about a third to a half of the BB2 would be allocated to these functions, so that person does other functions on the Olympics in the other times. So it is not really a matter of having drawn it from elsewhere in the department, it is a priority, and that is the allocation of our resources that we have done.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—But what I want to know is where the absorption is occurring, in line with that decision that there be a \$3 million campaign. Are you aware of that \$3 million campaign?

**Ms Dunn**—Yes, I have seen it. But that question of absorption within the department is not one that I can answer.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Who can answer it?

**Ms Dunn**—We would have to get back to you on that.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Would you do that?

**Ms Dunn**—Yes.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Thank you very much. I read in the submission under ‘Handling of Controversial Visitors’ that you are not expecting any increased or enhanced difficulty in the area of controversial visitors during the Olympic Games?

**Mr Tooth**—We are not expecting any unprecedented numbers, any numbers that will cause us difficulties, no. We have the procedures in place to deal with controversial visitors now and we expect to be able to deal with them during the games as well.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Because of the nature of this and the special rules that will apply at the Olympics, would your procedure merely be to accept that these controversial visitors are coming and let them in and say no more because you want to avoid at that time of international focus any unnecessary bad publicity on Australia?

**Mr Tooth**—No. I think, as with all our controversial visitors cases, we would consider them fully and make a decision based on our discussions with SOCOG and other respective agencies, but we understand from SOCOG we will also be discussing it with the International Olympic Committee. But our decision will be made, as all our decisions are made, by government at the time. I am sure we would make no undue consideration of it because of any Olympic decision.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—But isn’t that what the Olympic rules are about, though? Isn’t part of the requirement that Australia entered into that we will facilitate the entry of people, particularly accredited people? And accredited people can also be controversial people.

**Mr Tooth**—Certainly, but it would be considered on a case by case basis.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—That is the moot point. What is the plan to increase resources within the department for the decision making in this particular area?

**Mr Tooth**—We would be moving resources within my particular division as necessary. We still have not made a final decision on that. At the moment we have three within my section who deal with such issues, and it would be a question of making a decision closer to the time and anticipating, if we feel that there is a need—at the moment I do not anticipate that there will be a need—increasing the resources allocated to controversial visitors alone.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—You are operating on the basis that everybody associated with the Olympic Games, from the head through to the board, to the international committees, the national committees, are all of wonderful character?

**Mr Tooth**—Certainly not, no.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—But doesn't that actually send you a message immediately that you have got to be looking at this area? I would hope at this time—we are only 500-odd days away from the start of the games—that you would be making plans on it.

**Mr Tooth**—Certainly, and the flexibility is within our branch and within our division to deal with that at the moment. We will be making a further resource examination later this year, but at the moment we feel we have the resources.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—You feel you have the resources?

**Mr Tooth**—From information I have at the moment, yes. We have the resources in the branch to handle the particular aspects of controversial visitors which Foreign Affairs and Trade deals with.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—So you will not be looking for a recommendation from this committee that perhaps additional resources ought to be thought of for your particular area.

**Mr Tooth**—I always appreciate recommendations.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—I want to finish with a question that was included in the Immigration submission to us, and that is the matter of the identity of certain foreign nationals who come in. Have you seen the submission of Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs at 5.4 where they make reference to Palestine and Chinese Taipei and Taiwan? Can you elaborate on that a little bit further or explain it a bit further? I demurred from asking Immigration a question on it.

**Ms Dunn**—Specifically what would you like us to answer on that?

**Senator McKIERNAN**—If Palestine decides to send a team to the Olympics, they will be accredited through the SOCOG processes.

**Ms Dunn**—Yes.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—If they come here with Palestinian passports, will we be admitting them, even though we do not recognise Palestine as a nation state?

**Mr Tooth**—As I think the DIMA submission suggests, ordinary Palestinian authority passports are acceptable for travel, if you are talking only about that specific case.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—I am using that as an example. If Palestine is competing in the Olympic Games as a nation, we will be admitting those people—Palestinian passport holders—into this country as nationals of Palestine, or will we not be recognising them?

**Mr Tooth**—That question is related more to who is recognised by—not the national Olympic Committee but as to—

**Senator McKIERNAN**—In terms of our border controls—

**Mr Tooth**—In other words, we have the system in place to allow Palestinian athletes and journalists and others to attend the games. In other cases where we dispute or have concerns about the travel documentation, we would have to consider that on a case by case basis and it would be considered by agencies in Australia in consultation with SOCOG. It is hard to envisage examples at the moment, but if there are examples and if there are incidences our posts would come back to us and we would consider them at the time, again, as I said, on a case by case basis.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—But this is what I actually do not understand. Will Palestinian nationals travelling on a Palestinian passport be allowed to enter through an Australian Customs post or border point?

**Mr Tooth**—Yes. DIMA, who are responsible for this—their submission is quite clear—state:

Ordinary Taiwan and Palestinian authority passports . . . are acceptable for travel and entry purposes for these nationals.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Then what is the qualification on it from Foreign Affairs' point of view?

**CHAIR**—Would it be anybody from Palestine or Taiwan on a diplomatic passport who tried to enter? Not as part of the Olympic family, because they would have the Olympic family clearance, but they would still be on a passport. If they were part of the Olympic family and they were on a diplomatic passport, what would be the situation then? Would you recognise that or not?

**Ms Dunn**—If they are not part of the family but they would be on the passport—is that what you are saying?

**CHAIR**—No, on a diplomatic passport. There is no reason why they could not be part of the family and on a diplomatic passport.

**Ms Dunn**—We would not recognise the diplomatic passport in the case of Taiwan. It does not imply recognition of the state.

**CHAIR**—I am just trying to get to the bottom of where the difficulty is. Is it then that anybody who came in on a normal Taiwanese or Palestinian passport, an ordinary citizen's passport, would get through without any trouble but somebody who had a diplomatic passport would be refused?

**Ms Dunn**—We will have to take that question on notice and get back to you. Our understanding is that these sorts of issues are sorted out when they apply for their visa—the passport documentation that they have—and that is put in order at the time.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—That is the importance and the reason behind my questioning of you and why I deferred my questioning to Foreign Affairs. You are aware of the special purpose visas applying during the Olympic Games and that that will be done through SOCOG and the information relayed through DIMA as well, and that DSPV will be issued if everything is above board. There are special procedures in place for the Olympic Games. What I want to know is: how far are Australia's normal laws being circumvented in order to facilitate the Olympic Games?

**Mr Tooth**—That is a simple answer—not at all. We would not circumvent them.

**Ms Dunn**—If you would like, we could come back to you with some written advice on the specific question.

**Mr Tooth**—On the question of Palestinian diplomatic passports, yes. It would be handled in exactly the same way as we would handle any other concern over foreign travel documents. The post would receive the visa question, would receive the request for a visa; and, if there were concerns about it, it would come back to Australia where the relevant agencies—Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade—would consider the question. As a question of circumventing Australian law, I can only say no.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—So there are no special provisions to be made for the nationals of Palestine or Chinese Taipei to compete in the Olympic Games, or any other nation of a similar type? Europe is in some turmoil at the moment.

**Mr Tooth**—We have not made any special provisions, no. If there is turmoil in Europe, in a particular country at a particular time, and we had concern about that travel documentation, it would have to be made in the case of that athlete or that media representative or that controversial visitor. It is not a question of setting up special procedures at this stage.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—It is not?

**Mr Tooth**—I cannot see a reason why we would need to set up a special procedure beyond the procedures we have in place at the present time, unless we get advance intelligence, for example, that we might be expecting to see a substantial increase. We have not had that intelligence at the moment.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—So there was probably no need for a publicity campaign in the first instance, was there—additional expenditure over two years of \$700,000? Maybe it is all for naught, if you have got it all fixed.

**CHAIR**—Do I gather from the conversation that has gone on that you have no concerns relative to the Olympic Games or do you have some concerns?



**Mr Tooth**—Concerns?

**CHAIR**—Any concerns. Obviously this is going to be an extraordinarily important event. You said yourselves that it would affect Australia's image. Surely there must be some sort of situation you could envisage happening with the athletes. Countries tend to be extraordinarily protective of their athletes, because they win them gold medals and they do not want any of their athletes upset for any reason. It does not matter what their past is, whether they have been convicted or what. They are athletes and they get special status. Do you have any concerns, arising out of that, of a slightly difficult situation that you might have to handle?

**Mr Tooth**—My answer to that would be: of course. I know most of my policy counterparts in the department work on the principle that if something can go wrong it might or it will. So, yes, obviously there are concerns. We are talking about an enormously large number of people coming to Australia with all the requisite problems. We hope that we will have the procedures and systems in place, if they are not already in place, by that time. We hope that our negotiations and our discussions with other departments are preparing us for that.

**CHAIR**—This was not a trick question. I am really just, for the purposes of this inquiry, saying to you, 'We are here to listen to you and for you to tell us what's happening. Do you have any concerns?' I am not trying to trip you up or anything.

**Ms Dunn**—I think the answer is that we want to make sure it works successfully from our portfolio perspective and that we use it as a major opportunity to promote Australia positively. We are involved in a vast array of activities to avoid any possible negatives and to leverage off the Olympics especially. We are setting up, for instance, a centre in Sydney for the unaccredited media to ensure that they are looked after properly so that when they go back home they can convey the right messages about Australia, which is very important. I think 'concern' is not the word. We just want to make sure that we can leverage off it, we can get the best out of it, and where there could be some issues arising that we have the mechanisms in place to handle them, like facilitating entry at airports.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—I think you have explained my difficulty. We are operating on two basic differences. I was looking at the domestic interests and you were looking at the international interests. That is where I think we run into some problems.

**Mr Tooth**—The Olympics may provide numerous opportunities for asylum claims, it may provide numerous opportunities for refugee claims, and of course that is a concern for all elements of the Australian government who have a role in that. So, yes, of course I am concerned. We are looking at a large influx of potential problems. But, on the other hand, we hope that those procedures we have in place and those we have established through the system will be sufficient to cope with that.

**CHAIR**—Mr Tooth, this committee has been set up so that at the end of the process we hope we can share your certainty that it will.

**Mr Tooth**—Optimism probably, not certainty.

**CHAIR**—Be that as it may, I have a feeling that I am walking a bit through butter here, that I am not actually getting anywhere. Somewhere in the process you must have got together and said, ‘Okay, we’ve got the Olympics coming. Here is a whiteboard. What are the possible problems that we envisage which we wouldn’t normally have, whether it be volume or anything else? ‘Okay, dot points?’ Is it more refugee claims, or is there something else? We do not work in your department. We are just asking for day-to-day potential problems that could occur.

**Mr Tooth**—As our submission says, we do expect more refugee claims. It is just a factor of the number of people who are coming and past records.

**CHAIR**—That is not really the problem, is it? That is just: ‘All right, there will be more and we or Immigration can process them.’

**Mr Tooth**—With the obvious complications. We are talking about high profile sportsmen in some cases, we are talking about a huge media event, so there may be all those sorts of complications which enter into the discussion. But we may expect more complex requests for asylum.

**CHAIR**—Have you set up, within your department, strategies to deal with that?

**Mr Tooth**—Yes, and in discussion with other departments we are talking about, of course, the committees and working groups that are set up, et cetera.

**CHAIR**—If we actually had access to your books there would be a little paper which said, ‘What process is there if a high profile gold medal winner from outer something or other wants to have asylum? What process is to be taken with the Australian media, with the international media?’ So you have already looked at those possible issues and how you are going to deal with all levels, not just the person, but with all the different levels of media, the organisations, the committee and everything else.

**Mr Tooth**—Speaking for my section, we have a procedure manual which deals with what we would do in certain circumstances.

**CHAIR**—But you have not done any brainstorming, saying, ‘The Olympic Games are coming up, so we will see what could be the problems for this department and what would be the run-on from that both internationally and domestically.’ You have not specifically said, ‘Let’s relook at what we have got.’

**Ms Dunn**—Many of the issues cut across the responsibilities of other departments and we are involved in many committees looking at various aspects: for example, media on security—I think Billy might talk about that. We have identified the areas that we need to pay attention to and of building up—or we already have—the government infrastructure to work out how we would respond on each issue. Some of them are still evolving as the problems become clearer. It is basically that, but Billy might talk about the media aspect.

**Mr Williams**—We are very actively investigating scenario planning on the issues that might emerge during the games and the lead-up that could affect our reputation on the media

security issue. We are talking with the Sydney airport and we are involved with security agencies on the protocols of response should there be a terrorist act, should there be some hijack. So we would have a plan to brief and to alert the media as to how we are handling it before, during and after.

On the wider question of other issues that may well affect Australia's reputation through the games—indigenous issues, the environment, our tax, health, lifestyle, multiculturalism, whatever—we are actively involved in the planning process now of how we will prepare and have a way to manage those issues so that the reporting on them is accurate. So we are involved in the process with other agencies, with the Olympic committees, and with the other stakeholders, the sponsors, as well. There is work going on, but it is not in place yet.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—So the propaganda has been handled. Planning for that is well in train, but other things which are more mundane, concerns of border protection and so forth, are in hand and we do not need any extra. Is that the message I am getting from that?

**Mr Tooth**—I hope you are not misinterpreting my earlier answer on resources. Resources allocation is an ongoing issue. The committees and things that have been set up to deal with this, within the Australian government, consider as we get closer to the Olympics where the resources are to go and the department will make the same decision. Questions of controversial visitors and those sorts of things will be—

**Senator McKIERNAN**—I am sorry, I just cannot allow you to continue uninterrupted on that, because a \$3 million campaign has been put in place which DFAT is part of. DFAT is not your proper name now, but forgive me on that.

**Mr Tooth**—We don't mind.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—But you have not given us the information you were questioned on, and now you come with this other information. I have got a credibility problem in listening to your evidence at the moment.

**Mr Tooth**—What was the information that I have not given? I apologise, I must have missed that.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—My questioning was particularly on the handling of controversial visitors. You are not expecting any problems or any enhanced problems in that area?

**Mr Tooth**—No, I am not.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—I do not know where I have been in the past few years, but the Olympic Games is an ideal opportunity for this type of activity. In my own simple way, I believe it is actually happening already. But you, Mr Tooth, have assured me that there are no problems now and will not be any at the time of the Olympic Games. We are well on the way of handling how the media will handle it and how the propaganda is going to be handled if an event does take place. That is the message I have got from the evidence.

**Mr Tooth**—I apologise if I was oblique in my answer, but I was talking about whether resources now were sufficient, and I feel they are. The question of whether the resources during the games will be sufficient will be dealt with by that—

**Senator McKIERNAN**—My question was not about now, Mr Tooth, as I recall it, so will you please look at the *Hansard*. If I have got it wrong, pick up the phone and let me know I have got it wrong. I do not have a problem in admitting to that, but my recollection is that I was talking about resources in the lead time and during the games, not now.

**Mr Tooth**—As I think I said at the time, the resource questions like that will be dealt with at a branch and divisional level.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Eventually you did, yes.

**Mr Tooth**—And we will be moving them within the branch if necessary or seeking them from other areas.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—The time has passed when we were going to finish today, so let me thank you for coming, but let me also remind you that the committee might get back to you for more information. Of course, if you have any questions on the *Hansard*, please do get back to us.

**Proceedings suspended from 12.45 p.m. to 2.02 p.m.**

**DUNNE, Mr Brian Wayne, Technical Service Manager, Security Products Division, 3M Australia Pty Ltd**

**JUDGE, Mr David John Laurence, Sales and Marketing Manager, Security Products Division, 3M Australia Pty Ltd**

**CHAIR**—We welcome the witnesses from 3M to give evidence today. Although you are not required to give an oath, I do remind you that this is regarded as a proceedings of the parliament and that any misleading information would be regarded as a contempt of the parliament. I believe you are ready with the video, and it is all yours.

*Overhead transparencies were then shown—*

**Mr Judge**—Thank you. We welcome the opportunity of being able to be here today. One of the things I thought I might do first, if I may, is give a very quick presentation as to who 3M is because a lot of people do not quite understand the company. It is roughly heading towards a \$16 billion company. It is US based: we have about 50 per cent of our sales in the US, 50 per cent of our sales are international. We manufacture about 60,000 products and introduce about 500 new products a year. We sell about 6,000 products in Australia. You have probably used quite a few of them but would not realise that they are. I am sure you know post-it notes, those little yellow post-it note pads—they happen to be one of ours—sticky tapes, abrasives, chemicals, pharmaceuticals. Your library here is protected by a book protection system that 3M supplies. So there are a lot of products, but they might not necessarily register as to who we are.

We spend about \$1 billion a year in R&D and we have a new \$2.5 million technical centre in Sydney. Some of the technology you will see here today has actually been developed here in Australia. The area of the company that we will be talking about is verification products, and we are a major supplier of security laminates for most governments, certainly in the areas of passports, visas and drivers licences, ID cards, documents of authenticity and security labels. We have been working with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade here for about 18 or 19 years, supplying the security laminates on passports.

If you could just pick up the little passport in front of you, if you could open it up to the front page, you take the little black viewer that you have, hold it up to your eye and look through it like that, you will see that the image changes.

**CHAIR**—Very clever.

**Mr Judge**—That is what we call a retro image and we will be referring to that as we go along, but I thought I would give you a live demonstration. In the case of the Australian passport, that would be the Australia coat of arms which you would see there. This is a demonstration piece, so you actually see some circles.

What we would like to address today are five things that came out of your paper. We would like to talk about passport identification, passport authentication, visa list creation,

flight manifesto and wanted list surveillance. I am not sure whether any of you spend a lot of time on what we call the primary line, the immigration line as you come in at Sydney airport or Melbourne airport. I would like to visit that for a moment to try and set the scene. If you are coming into Australia with electronic travel authority already approved, the officer on the barrier has between 20 and 30 seconds to process you. In that period of time he has got to view the passport, identify whether it is a genuine item, whether it has been tampered with or make a decision as to whether he should go further or she should go further with that.

We also know that they are subjected to peak periods, especially in the early morning. At that time they are dealing with tired passengers who have travelled a long way, and obviously there are some whose English is not very good or they cannot speak English at all. When the Olympics come along, we know that we are going to have to be dealing with much higher volumes of people; therefore, the peak periods are going to be much longer. To handle that, we are going to have less experienced officers manning the barriers. There is going to be a wider range of nationalities coming across the barriers and there will also be a higher risk of illegal entry into the country as people will try and get in, knowing that there is going to be a pressure period.

So the first thing that we have to look at is passport identification. There will be over 200 countries competing in the Olympics. Currently there are a thousand different passport types legally credible in the world. Less than half of those will conform to the ICAO standard of 9303, so many of them will be first time viewing to the officers on the barrier. The system we are going to be talking about today can store all of those current passport formats and can recall any one of those within about a second period, can display it in full colour and can highlight the peculiar features of that passport. If it is an ICAO passport, then the machine is set to automatically bring up the format of the passport. If it is a non-ICAO passport the officer will have to key in the first three identification country code and that will bring the image up.

If there are two passports current for that country, such as the case we have here in Ireland—there is a passport that was legitimate before March 1996, which is still current, and one after 1996—it will display both of those. So at this point in time the officer at the barrier at least can compare the document or the passport he has in front of him with what it should look like. The next step is to determine if this is a genuine passport. To one degree or another, all passports have security features that can be authenticated. The degree of authentication really depends on the quality of the security technology put into those passports by the different countries. There are some features like holograms that cannot be authenticated.

However, we can store into this system the most current passport overt security features. We can recall any one of those formats in approximately a one-second period. It can verify the type of laminate that country is using, it can look for the issuing country's embedded logos and do a comparison, it can search for any tampering, cuts or photo substitution and, if the country is using an ultraviolet or an infra-red image, it can search for that and do a comparison of the images.

**CHAIR**—Mr Judge, would you prefer questions now as we go along?

**Mr Judge**—Please.

**CHAIR**—Not on a wide range of issues, but going back to the holograms, if they cannot be authenticated why would anybody use them?

**Mr Judge**—Can I use a country here, let us say New Guinea?

**CHAIR**—Yes.

**Mr Judge**—It does not have a lot of money and, although it is a lower level of security, at least it is one level of security that they can put on. But in the actual verification of holograms they can be duplicated very easily today. I will use an example. We all know of Microsoft and we know, for argument's sake, how their products can be duplicated, particularly in, shall we say, China. They have a little document which is a certificate of authenticity and it has a hologram on it, as well as a bit of security material. They have to change this every three to four months, because by the time that period has gone the Chinese are already duplicating that hologram and putting out a duplicate product. So it is very simple to duplicate a hologram.

**CHAIR**—Thank you.

**Mr Judge**—The machine that does this is this little box here. It is a very powerful computer, and that is what it is. It works on a Windows NT basis. It could perform any other duties that the border officer has to have in his carousel. There are a couple of models. We see a bottom loading machine here. Some countries would prefer top loading ones so that they can set this flush within the work stations—they do not have a lot of room—and for handling papers. I might also add that the machine will also read cards. As you know, in some countries they have border cards instead of passports. The first thing the machine does is to look at the front page, reads the machine readable language. This is an Australian passport. It goes into its memory and says, 'These are the security features that we should look for in the Australian passport,' or conversely the Canadian, the American, the English or whatever country.

If it has one of those security laminates that I have showed you there, it will compare the image to the image in the memory and say it is a match or non-match. If there are infra-red or ultraviolet images, such as in the American passport, it will compare those and see that it is there first and then see that it is the correct match.

The Super Black image B900: you may recall in our submission to you we talked about a situation where in Hungary they picked up a number of Greek passports that were forged. Through the naked eye the passport looked perfect but when submitted to interrogation through the machine, under the B900 light we got a completely blank page. What happens with passports is they are supposed to be printed with a certain type of black ink that is only visible in that range. So when it came up that there was nothing there, the inspectors went further into it and discovered that they had been printed on an ink jet printer instead of a proper printing type process. So we were able in that way to discover that they were forged passports.

If there is a ghosting image, as we see here, it will compare the ghosting image against the original image, and I think some of the passport samples I showed you showed a ghosting image. Of course, as I indicated earlier, it will match the logos. So if these are taking place, then at least the officer knows what the passport should look like and that the device has checked all the security features in it and has let him or her know that that is now a genuine item. This can take the space of about five to eight seconds.

This slide shows something else that we are doing. If we look at this page, we will see that to the onlooker's eye it looks quite a normal passport, but when we subject it to light we will see that there has been a cut made down the edge here, which would have been probably along there, so one could indicate that maybe the photograph underneath has been removed and replaced. We can see that some characters here have been changed, that some chemicals have been used on the laminate to try to get down to the machine readable language, to change that, and in this case an overlable had been put on to change some information. So that is how it can interrogate for tampering.

There is another issue that you may be aware of. Under the ETA system, or electronic travel authority system, there is no photograph now that links that person to the ETAS record. Also for the Olympic-Paralympic family's members it also allows them to come into the country without a visa. But once a person enters, either as a family member or under the electronic transport authority we have no record of what they look like. So, at the end of the time when they should have been going out, if that person does not turn up and you have to go looking for them, who do you look for? You may have a name but you have no idea of what the person looks like.

With this system we can create a temporary visa at the point of arrival. This could be an electronic record which is attached to the visitor's face, to a temporary number, such as their passport, and on leaving Australia the temporary visa could be cancelled. If that person becomes an overstayer, we would at least know what they looked like when they arrived in the country. And if we read the data here, we can collect any of that data required and attach it to the ETA, including the photograph.

Flight manifestos: you may be aware that there is a problem these days where passengers can destroy their documentation when they are on a flight, which can lead to asylum seeking status when they arrive in the country. Passports can be swapped in flight, so the person that is getting off the plane is not necessarily the one that got on it. I know this does not really reflect the Olympic situation, but in a downed aircraft situation there are great difficulties experienced in actually reconstructing the passenger list. What we can do is create a record of all travellers as they enter the air bridge. The complete manifesto of all those travellers can be recorded and sent with the aircraft for comparison at the arrival point, or alternatively transmitted from the departure point to the arrival point for prechecking or watch-list surveillance.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—For that wouldn't you need the cooperation of the embarking country?



**Mr Judge**—Yes, it can be done at the airline point. It can be done at two points. It can actually be done at the point of checking in, or it can be done at the gate prior to coming down onto the aircraft.

Wanted list surveillance: as we know, last year two embassies and one Planet Hollywood were attacked by terrorists. There was that unfortunate situation a few years ago where the Israeli athletes were attacked during the Munich Olympics. Terrorists will rarely travel under their own name or on a passport of the country that sponsors them, and quite often they will try and change the way they look. We can load into this system a wanted list and it can interrogate each passport that comes through and compare it against that wanted list. That wanted list can be made up of faces given different angles; it can be even under disguises or it can even be a photographic police identity kit.

What it does is check the database of that face and it will compare it to perhaps the alert or wanted list. We can set percentage on it, so that it lets us know of anybody who conforms to the configuration by over 80 per cent. So let us go back to the primary line at the immigration area. The operator would just place the passport into the machine. In about five to six seconds, they would get a screen light coming up here saying that everything was passed. On the other hand, as this would indicate, it would say that there was an alert, that the expiration date had expired, that in this case there was a photo match and in our opinion, or in the machine's opinion, there was a 91 per cent chance the person standing in front of you was somebody on that wanted list.

If it was an Australian passport it would expect to see that logo, but it found that logo, so there was obviously some problem in regard to the laminates, and it also indicated that there was a tamper within the passport itself. What would happen here is that the primary line officer would then indicate a problem and that person would be taken to what we call secondary line investigation. What we will look at in the demonstration in a moment is the screens that the secondary line people have, which are able to go into far more detail..

**CHAIR**—Mr Judge, just on that one, everything is wrong with that person—you would grab him quickly. But I presume all you need is one of any of those to come up, even with the 90 per match with the face and you immediately whip them off.

**Mr Judge**—The situation with this is that in all cases, except for the photograph, the operator at the primary line can override it. So he may have a look at it and see that for some reason it was a mismatch or something of that nature. In the case of a photograph a supervisor has to come along and clear the person. So he cannot go any further until the supervisor has checked out or cleared that face. This is all done on mathematics, angles of noses and faces, and this sort of thing. It is a well-proven process that is used; it is used in the US in a number of applications. Sometimes you may just get someone who is quite close to the person, but you can override it.

There are two things here. It can also help perhaps alleviate some politically sensitive situation. We had a situation here in the US where the US were trying to improve ties with Iran. They invited a sporting group across and as they arrived they went through immigration and unfortunately they were pulled aside and they were photographed and fingerprinted and there was a bit of a political situation. This sort of thing could stop that happening, because

if you had to have a special check, it could even be done at a much lower level, and most of the people coming in would never notice. I am sure you have seen the sorts of figures we are talking about here, but \$7 billion is the estimated income organised crime obtains for helping around six million people a year eagerly gain foreign country entry.

What we would like to do now, because that has finished my little part of the presentation, is to actually give you the next level, which is a demonstration of how the equipment would work at the secondary line. This would be the sort of screen that they would get at the secondary line.

**Mr Dunne**—Of course this is the process where the equipment does all the checking and it will come back and tell you whether it is happy with that particular passport or not.

**Mr Judge**—In this instance it has come up and indicated that the OCR, or the machine-readable language component of the machinery, believes there is an error, and it has indicated there is a ‘confidence low’ factor.

**Mr Dunne**—So on the secondary line there is the possibility here for someone to actually go to the OCR screen. Just in line with what David mentioned before about the inks used in printing, this is what you should see. When you look at the passport under the right light, all of the black text is showing up quite clearly. This is the sort of thing that you see with regard to the seal which you would have seen through that little light.

Then there is another screen used to have a look for the cuts and so forth, and if there is any security underneath the photograph it is looked at. This is the idea of a secondary line where they have the ability to have a closer look at what is the story with the passport and to find out whether there is some problem where the passport had just been damaged and there was actually no attempt to change the details.

This is an example of a passport with a real tamper. The only way is just checking the database for that face. It shows you here a potential tamper and it indicates to check secure media, so on the primary line they also have a thing on the front there. That just allows that they can actually flip over and have a look and it clearly shows up a point where possibly somebody has tried to change some of the information on the machine readable part of the passport.

On this one, everything else is valid on this passport except that it has come up with a potential tamper, and in this case you can actually go there. There are bits on there—it highlights a bit of green on it—that it thinks need further investigation, a possible tampering with the passport.

**Mr Judge**—That would line up with the edge of the photograph so somebody might have been trying to get the photograph out.

**Mr Dunne**—This is a passport that, for all intents and purposes, looks very much like the real thing, but it has been printed using different printing technology, like an ink jet or a dot matrix style printer. Basically, it says there is an OCR read error. It has not been able to read any of that information on there.

**Mr Judge**—Which is what happened in the Greek situation.

**Mr Dunne**—But, as soon as you go to that OCR screen where before we saw all of the text was nice and black, it is blank. You are in a situation where the inks used in that printing process do not respond in the correct manner.

Just another quick one: here is an example of a passport that actually has identified the country. Utopia is our demonstration country, if you like. When we check the secure logo it has not been able to verify the logo, and this time if they were to go out they would actually see an Australian logo in this case here. That is where it has done the check and the logo has not matched.

Last but not least, it is indicating it checked the photo ID and it should pop up. Here is that image and here is the one that is stored on the database that it has matched this against and the confidence level it has and that kind of stuff.

**CHAIR**—I cannot think like that. They give it a confidence level, do they?

**Mr Judge**—Yes, it is 85 per cent in this case confidence level. The machine is saying there is 95 per cent chance that these two people are the same.

**CHAIR**—Yes, I know what it means. What do you accept?

**Mr Judge**—Usually they say anything over 80.

**Mr Dunne**—It depends on the quality of the image that is stored on the database as well compared with what we are reading off the passport. So that is the idea: it gives some information to the person. There is the percentage we think it is and they can use that in conjunction with looking at the person to decide whether that person needs to be investigated further or can be let go, passed on.

**CHAIR**—So if 79 came up on the primary line they would call over somebody? It is that rigid, is it?

**Mr Dunne**—You probably would not have the threshold set of 79. If the computer picked up a 79 per cent match, it probably would not—you set it where you want it.

**Mr Judge**—You can set the level at whatever you like.

**CHAIR**—That is what I was wondering. You have just arbitrarily set 80 on the—

**Mr Judge**—Yes, there would be a decision by Immigration as to what level they wanted to set it at.

**CHAIR**—And the usual is?

**Mr Judge**—Usually it is around about 80.

**Mr Dunne**—You find that the lower the level you set the more times you are going to match it up with somebody.

**CHAIR**—Yes, obviously.

**Mr Dunne**—What it does basically is take the picture and converts it into lines and stuff and creates a digital map—like a big long number, if you like—and then it just looks at how closely it can match that number on the database.

**Mr Judge**—Unless there are any questions, we have reached the end of it. What we were trying to do was to indicate that we know there are a whole lot of problems currently that the primary line is subjected to. But certainly in the period of time of the Olympics or of the Paralympics it is going to be an even heavier workload which is going to compound some of those current issues there at the moment. But we thank you very much for giving us the opportunity of being here today. I am not sure if there are any more questions.

**CHAIR**—If you want to have a seat and we will see if there is anything we want to take up with you. Obviously you observe this in your day-to-day activities and how it is working. From your own point of view, what would you see as potential problems arising out of the Olympics as opposed to normal everyday use?

**Mr Judge**—I think one of the biggest problems, as we see it, is the extra workload that is going to be there at the period of time the Olympics is on. It is going to put extra pressure and strain on the officers on the line. It will mean, through the sheer volume, additional people have to be brought in who are not as experienced or trained. The pressure to maintain the 30 seconds to process people going through will mean that, in a pressured work situation, there is going to be a lot of opportunity for things to be missed. We feel here is an opportunity for a lot of that decision making to be taken away from the person and a lot of the checking to be done automatically. It does not relieve the officer from making a decision, but it assists them and gives them the tools to make a better decision to process people. We believe it will speed up the process and give confidence.

**CHAIR**—How much of what you have shown us there will be in train by the Olympics?

**Mr Judge**—It is available now.

**CHAIR**—Have we taken it up?

**Mr Judge**—We are in discussions with Immigration and Customs on it at the moment. We are also in discussion with the airlines. In fact, we have a presentation to Qantas, United Airlines and Air New Zealand on Monday. That will be done actually in Los Angeles as one of the points there. As I said, we are talking to Immigration at the moment on it.

**CHAIR**—Are you presuming that this is going to be taken up by Immigration on Australian fronts?

**Mr Judge**—We would like to think that they would seriously consider it, yes.

**CHAIR**—So, if you took what is available now and what you can offer if your whole system is implemented as you would wish, what would be the percentage take-up in efficiency?

**Mr Judge**—You mean the processing of people through?

**CHAIR**—Yes, and identifying the whole. I presume you would have done that as part of your selling strategies.

**Mr Judge**—Yes, but it is always very difficult to put an exact figure on it. I think from experience that we have—and I will revert back to Hungary because we have been monitoring that—even we were surprised at the amount of false passports that were picked up. It was far greater than we ever visualised and most of those would have just passed automatically because to the naked eye for a short-term inspection they just looked as genuine an item as you would see. A guess is that, at worst, the officers on the line would know that at least every opportunity of checking is being done and that the worst situation is that they are not allowing anybody through that they should not allow through because of work pressures. As far as how many extra people we would catch, I would hate to put an exact percentage on it, but my guess is there is a lot more happening there than any of us would—

**CHAIR**—From the Hungarian example?

**Mr Judge**—From the Hungarian example, I think in our submission—and you may like to refer to it so my figures are exact—I think it was 14 passports in about a three-week period.

**CHAIR**—So that is 14 out of how many?

**Mr Judge**—Sorry, I can put that on notice and come back to you, if you like. I do not know exactly.

**CHAIR**—I presume this is an extraordinarily expensive system. It does not look cheap.

**Mr Judge**—To be quite frank, it is not. If you consider that is a full-blown computer there—and it would depend on the—

**CHAIR**—Not relatively.

**Mr Judge**—It depends on the numbers.

**CHAIR**—But absolutely.

**Mr Judge**—It ranges between \$5,000 to \$10,000 a unit, and that depends on the number and the levels of software that you buy or implement, because you do not have to put all of the features in it. It can also be done on what we call a click charge: so many cents for everyone that passes through it. So it can be done like a rental type—

**CHAIR**—So we can buy it from you in two different ways?

**Mr Judge**—Certainly. That was in US dollars, by the way.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—In the context of Australia's international image overseas, should we be even considering buying it because if it works we are likely to find people and it could be damaging our international reputation? I had a little lingering doubt. That doubt has lingered since the appearance of Foreign Affairs earlier this morning who do not envisage any problems. Your comment in passing—and you actually I believe had it in writing as well—was there will be no visas during the Olympic Games.

**Mr Judge**—That is our understanding. Family members of Olympians do not require a visa to enter Australia. That is our understanding.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—That is not technically correct. There will be a special purpose visa which will be issued in conjunction with SOCOG who, in turn, I would imagine would have a photographic record of the facial image of the athlete, the coach, the accredited Olympic family member or Paralympic family member. Is that your understanding as well?

**Mr Judge**—I will take that under advice. My understanding of it was it is with the ETA—the electronic travel authority—which does not require a photograph. It would be under that type of basis. That was the understanding that we had. We stand corrected if that is not right.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—My next question was going to be that, if you accepted that the family member visa issuing system is separate from the 223,000 other visitors who were expected, that would be the target group that you would be seeking to screen through this BorderGuard method, would it?

**Mr Judge**—It would be, but it would not differentiate between any passengers coming through, so you would get the additional passengers coming in for the Olympics, but it would also be doing it for anybody else who is coming through.

**Mr Dunne**—Who is a visitor to the country.

**Mr Judge**—Who is a visitor to the country.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—We are not just simply talking about—

**Mr Judge**—It would not differentiate between one or the other. If people are coming here for the Olympics, fine, but it would also encompass everybody else who is just passing through.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—The system will pick up altered or tampered or otherwise rearranged passports?

**Mr Judge**—Correct.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—What about a proper document that is incorrectly issued—there are some; dare I say the word ‘graft’? I do not think it has happened in Australia, but if there was somebody in the official passport issuing office in an overseas country who wrongly issues a passport to a terrorist in order for that terrorist to get into Australia, your system would not necessarily pick that one up?

**Mr Judge**—If it is a genuine document issued on false papers, let’s put it that way, obviously the passport itself is a genuine document and therefore if it is done in that way all of the security features within it would be correct. We would hope that, if it is a terrorist, it would be a recognised terrorist and under those circumstances would be on the wanted list and would be caught through the fact that their face would match with the face that we would have stored on that wanted list.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—But the records of those international terrorists are not all that clear, as I understand it—Abu Nidal.

**Mr Judge**—You are correct. The system is only as good as people can put into it. You cannot find people if we have not located them in.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Many, if not most, of the passports in issuance now throughout the world are of seven years or 10 years life?

**Mr Judge**—Correct.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—And the ageing process that occurs over that period, particularly for members of parliament, dramatically changes the image of people.

**Mr Judge**—That is correct.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—Lots of my colleagues use old photographs! How will your system manage that?

**Mr Judge**—I might ask Brian to help me on this one because of the technical nature. It does not actually take the photograph; it does a mathematical equation of the face and, if my memory serves me correctly, it would measure the angles between the eyes and the nose and the eyes and the ears and the jaw and this type of thing. It creates a mathematical formula. So you can change the colour of your hair and you can change your eyes, you can wear glasses, you can do all sorts of things, but it is not looking for that. It is looking for other features. Am I correct?

**Mr Dunne**—Yes, parts of geometries of the face and so forth.

**CHAIR**—Basic bone structure.

**Mr Dunne**—We have had it pick up the difference between somebody when the picture was captured when they were young and then about eight years on.

**Mr Judge**—At 16 and then at 26, and obviously in that period of time a woman changes quite considerably. She had long, flowing hair at one stage, then she had short, cropped hair.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—The images you showed us on here were all electronic, machine readable ones. What about the older type ones, some of which are still in existence, the old paper ones with the stamp? How does the system handle those, with the stuck-in photograph?

**Mr Judge**—A stuck-in photograph would register just the same way. We wanted to be sure the ones we were showing here were the digitised photographs, which are currently what we use here in Australia and have been for a number of years. You are correct. A lot of countries use the photograph stuck on the page with the security number. The American passport is still using that type of process. It will handle that quite well.

**Mr Dunne**—But is this the difference possibly between an ICAO standard passport to a non-ICAO standard passport? ICAO standard passports have the machine readable zone which allows the system to read that and determine what the country of origin should be for that passport and the details of that person, and that is where it allows it to automatically determine what security features should be in place. If it is not an ICAO passport, then it requires the operator to punch in the three-letter code for that country, in which case it then comes up and prompts the operator through what things he should see on that passport.

**Mr Judge**—You know the two lines at the bottom of the passport. You understand that. The first swipe tells the country, and that triggers it. If it is an Australian passport, you see what it looks like. If it is an obscure African country or one of the new emerging Russian countries or something of that nature, that might not be a recognised ICAO passport. The operator would have to key in the three-letter ID code of that country—I refer back to that database I showed you with all of the pictures of it—and that would indicate what the security features are.

**Mr Dunne**—Yes, the idea there being that there are so many passports out there and there is a high likelihood that somebody manning the primary line, particularly through the Olympics, is going to see a passport they have never seen before, and it is going to be difficult in training to entrench into people's heads 1,000 different types of passport. So the idea here is that they do not have to remember that. They can key it in and it will bring it up. Rather than trying to thumb through a manual this big and take the time to do that, this will come straight up and tell them straightaway this is what it should look like visually, and it should have this in this spot, this in this spot, and if you look at it under a UV light it should have this, or whatever is in it. So at least that gives them the opportunity to quickly determine that that is in fact a passport of that particular country that it says it is, and not something that has been made up to look like one.

**Senator McKIERNAN**—The Olympics are on in 500-odd days time from now. Would it be possible to have these in all the major ports of embarkation for the Olympics in that time?

**Mr Judge**—Sorry?



**Senator McKIERNAN**—Have this system in operation in time for the Olympics?

**Mr Judge**—Most certainly, and certainly within every port in Australia. Most definitely.

**Ms MAY**—Has it been trialled anywhere else? And has any other country picked up the concept?

**Mr Judge**—Yes. It is a good point. Let me just step back, if I may, and give you a little bit of the history of this. This was started here in Australia. I am not sure if you recall, but about three years ago a trial was done in Brisbane in which they offered people to process themselves coming through on passports. It was a huge machine, and people stood in front of it. They put their passport in the front and it just started comparing the face with the passport, and from that we learnt a lot, because we were one of a number of companies, and it was our piece of machinery here that was doing all of the passport interrogation.

We then took that to the CeBIT Hanover Fair in conjunction with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Immigration two years ago—and we get to the next level of development by talking to a lot of other countries. This machine was shown at CeBIT about April 1998, if my memory serves me correctly, and from that moment we have done a considerable amount of work with a number of countries. The first country to pick it up is Hungary. We are now in discussion with quite a few others—I am probably not at this point at liberty to say who, if you will forgive me for that—including the Australian government; we are talking to Immigration at the moment. It has caused a fair degree of interest.

**Ms MAY**—So Hungary is the only country at this stage?

**Mr Judge**—It is like a controlled test, if you like to put it that way. We are working with them. We selected that country and we are proving the software, improving the finer points of it. But we are at a point now where it is a commercially acceptable product.

**Mr RIPOLL**—Mr Judge, in relation to the actual units, how many do you estimate we would need to cover our own needs?

**Mr Judge**—Ideally there would be one at one of the booths at all major airports. Also there would probably be a number at seaports. We have been talking to Immigration and one of the things the Immigration people have thought about with sea travel is that the equipment is portable, so if they could get on a boat in New Zealand, for argument's sake, they could process everybody coming across the Tasman and by the time they got here they would have pre-cleared everybody. That sort of thing could happen. We are working our way through that with them at the moment.

**Mr RIPOLL**—Have you got a ballpark idea?

**Mr Judge**—I would suggest somewhere around 200 would cover most of the major ports in Australia.

**Mr RIPOLL**—Does your machine actually recognise characters, names? Would it be able to read a name?

**Mr Judge**—In what context?

**Mr RIPOLL**—If it picks up the name of somebody who is known, would it be able to recognise that name, or aliases so it could have a name—

**Mr Judge**—You could check that name against the wanted list of names, if that is what you mean—a predetermined list that you can—

**Mr RIPOLL**—Yes, if there is a certain person that you are looking for, you could enter that information in—and perhaps aliases.

**Mr Judge**—Sure. There is another aspect of this which probably did not come out and that was outbound travel. If we are checking for somebody leaving the country, you can load either their photograph or their details into it and it will pick up at the point of—

**CHAIR**—That would be for custody cases and things like that?

**Mr Judge**—Custody cases, wanted criminals, tycoons that are trying to get out of the country.

**Mr RIPOLL**—Is there any link between the image—you said 85 per cent of recognition—and a name; to say, ‘Look, there is a relationship between that image and certain names’?

**Mr Dunne**—Yes, because it would search the database, find a match of the image, and there could possibly even be more than one image that it might match. Once you have picked a person like that, then you would interrogate that later on and it would come up and tell you what names are associated with those images that are shown.

**Mr RIPOLL**—So it is currently built into the system that you have?

**Mr Judge**—You may have a terrorist who travels under four or five different names so you could load those names as the name search, but it is quite possible that the person trying to get into the country is not using any one of those aliases that they have previously known of. So what it would do is match the face, but it would then come back and tell you that that person is also probably known by half-a-dozen different aliases.

**CHAIR**—Thank you very much, Mr Dunne and Mr Judge. If we have any more inquiries of the type of evidence you have given today the committee will contact you.

*Evidence was then taken in camera—*

**Committee adjourned at 3.54 p.m.**

