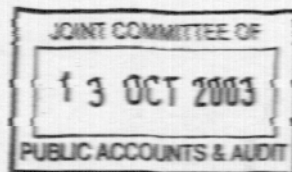




Australian Government
Australian Customs Service

Submission No. 60

Customs House
5 - 11 Constitution Avenue
Civic ACT 2601



9 October 2003



The Secretary
Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit
Parliament House

Dear Mr Catchpole

At the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit (JCPAA) hearing on *Aviation Security* on 4 September 2003, committee members asked a number of questions that I was not able to answer at the time and I undertook to provide a response in writing.

The answers to the questions taken on notice are attached.

Yours sincerely

Gail Batman
National Director
Border Intelligence and Passengers



Australian Government
Australian Customs Service

JOINT COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT

Review of Aviation Security in Australia

Australian Customs Service
Supplementary Submission - 8 October 2003

Senator Watson asked - What has been the dollar impact on costs to Customs of the extra security associated with the September 11 incident?

The answer to the question is as follows:

Some of the work undertaken by Customs in response to 11 September falls within the broader gamut of border enforcement activity and occurs within existing funded activities with an increased counter terrorism focus. Examples of this include:

- working with relevant security agencies to develop possible indicators of potential terrorists or affiliates and applying this understanding in day to day activity at the border;
- using existing capability to screen passengers in advance of their arrival at the border; and
- continuing trials of biometric technology in the form of facial recognition equipment linked to passport information.

In addition, the Government has allocated \$42.3 million over four years to 2005/06 towards the expansion and enhancement of Customs advance passenger information systems, building on our existing capacity to screen passengers prior to arrival at the border. To date \$4.6M has been spent on the project.

The Government response to the Bali incident has also allocated \$14.95 million over four years to 2005/06 for new fraud detecting document readers. The readers will be installed at all international airports to improve Customs false passports detection capability. To date \$0.3M has been spent on the project and a further \$4M is expected to be outlaid following delivery of equipment and acceptance testing towards the end of this month.

Customs created a Counter Terrorism (CT) Section in November 2002 to coordinate Customs counter terrorism activity and to facilitate assistance to

Commonwealth agencies such as the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation and the Australian Federal Police in their investigation of terrorism. The Section is also responsible for coordinating Customs national CT planning and the development and delivery of CT awareness training that is mandatory for all officers. Customs has implemented a CT Steering Committee, chaired by the CEO for Customs operational and policy responses in the event of a terrorist incident.

Ms Grierson asked for information on the number of prohibited items detected by Customs.

The answer to the question is as follows:

In 2000/01 Customs seized 2281 prohibited imports from passengers at international airports. *Seizure rates increased significantly for 2001/02 and 2002/03 to 5298 and 5406 prohibited items respectively. These items ranged from firearms, flick knives and blowpipes to electric fly swatters.*

Mr Charles asked – Has Customs ever detected either at an airport or a port a surface-to-air missile?

The answer to the question is as follows:

Customs records indicate that there have been no detections of attempts to illegally import surface to air missiles. Within the wider Customs environment there have been detections of other undeclared munitions items, for example artillery shells and projectiles. In all cases these have been inert at the time of arrival.

Import permissions have been issued for various munitions items being supplied to the Australian Defence Force. Relevant import permits accompanied these items.