

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
2011-12 Supplementary Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 7

Question No: 201

Topic: National Indigenous Social Survey Findings

Hansard Page: 21/10/2011 CA29

Senator Scullion asked:

With regards to statistics in the National Indigenous Social Survey findings - we note there has been a significant increase in drug related incidents. Given these statistics, are we making any changes as to how we go about our trafficking compliance regime?

Answer:

The National Indigenous Social Survey does not include data on drug related incidents, however, the Closing the Gap in the NT Monitoring Report January - June 2011 reported that drug related incidents decreased by 10 per cent between 2007-08 and 2008-09 before increasing 30 per cent from 2008-09 to 2009-10 and 28 per cent from 2009-10 to 2010-11. These data were provided by the NT Police.

There has been an increase in reported crime since the start of Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) as result of a number of factors including a new resident police presence in many communities.

To reduce the supply of licit and illicit substances, the Substance Abuse Intelligence Desks (SAID) coordinate with FaHCSIA, a multi-jurisdictional partnership involving police in the Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia.

Dog Operation Units (DOUs) have been set up in Alice Springs, Katherine and Darwin and since January 2011, 36.98 kilograms of cannabis has been seized by the SAID and DOU.

The growing effectiveness of the SAIDs/DOUs can be attributed to a cooperative tri-state approach (NT, SA & WA) that focuses on building relationships in remote communities, which has lead to an increased intelligence flow to identify drug and alcohol traffickers.

If people in the NTER areas are more able to report crimes and traffickers and more perpetrators are apprehended, this is likely to have a positive effect on community safety.

This is supported by the NTER evaluation that found that almost three out of four people surveyed said their community is safer now than it was three years ago.