

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S PORTFOLIO

Group: 3

Program: Other Agency

Question No. AE15/018

Senator Milne asked the following question at the hearing on 24 February 2015:

Senator MILNE: In terms of the significant investor visa program, there have been allegations that the significant investor visa program has been the means for laundering money, particularly from China but not exclusively so, and particularly into the property market in Australia. Can you indicate whether the AFP is involved in any cross checking with the significant investor visa program and the allegations of corruption from China and the Chinese government in particular in relation to those matters?

Mr Colvin: That rings no particular bells with me. I do not believe that it rings any bells with the people at the front table with me, so we will take that on notice and come back to you if the AFP has had any referrals on those matters or if we have in some way been involved in the assessment of them. I do not believe that we are involved in the assessments.

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

The AFP is not involved in the assessment process for significant investor visas. State government agencies may support/sponsor significant investor visas and State/Territory Business Owner visas. The Department of Immigration and Border Protection is responsible for assessing visa applications. Where Foreign Investment Review Board (FIRB) approval is required by a foreign investor to purchase property, FIRB conducts an assessment process which may include provision of the applicants name to the AFP for criminal and Interpol indices checks.

The AFP is working closely with Chinese law enforcement in relation to alleged economic crime offenders who have fled their jurisdiction, including to Australia.