

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

Program: ASIO

Question No. AE17-128

Senator Rhiannon asked the following questions at the hearing on 28 February 2017:

1. Over the past five years for each year how many MPs have been investigated by the ASIO?
2. Over the past five years for each year how many staff of MPs have been investigated by the ASIO?
3. Have these investigations involved interception of phone conversations, email communication, social media posts and/or metadata surveillance?
4. Considering when you have been asked similar questions in the past you have cited operational reasons for the lack of information released, could you detail what type of information you can release that is not "operational"?

The answers to the honourable senator's questions are as follows:

1. For reasons of national security, ASIO does not comment on operations or investigations.
2. For reasons of national security, ASIO does not comment on operations or investigations.
3. For reasons of national security, ASIO does not comment on operations or investigations.
4. In order for ASIO to perform its functions, ASIO needs to protect its sources, methods and capabilities.

It is fundamental to the continued effective operation of ASIO for the specific details of areas of interest, the identity of subjects of security interest, the degree of ability to obtain intelligence in relation to those subjects, sources (including human sources), investigative techniques, technical capabilities and work methods, successes and the information derived from successes, be kept in the strictest possible secrecy.

This secrecy can extend to neither confirming nor denying if certain activities have occurred, as to do so could compromise current or future activities or operations, expose ASIO's collection and analysis methods, place ASIO officers or other persons including human sources at risk, and inhibit ASIO's ability to protect Australia's security.