

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

Group: 3

Program: Other Agency

Question: BE14/006

Senator Whish-Wilson asked the following question at the hearing on 26-29 May 2014:

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Thank you. I have a couple of quick questions on the activities of the Australian Federal Police in the area of illegal fishing for Patagonian toothfish and on whether you have been involved with any activities recently in Malaysia in the area of organised crime and access to that fishery.

Mr Negus: It is not something I have been briefed on. I have just checked with the deputy commissioner in charge of operations. We have not had any involvement in that. Clearly we work closely with the Pacific nations. We have liaison officers stationed out there and illegal fishing is a key concern in that part of the world. We do provide support and training and those sorts of things. But, for that specific measure in Malaysia, no, we have not been involved.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Do you know who the appropriate—

Mr Negus: If I were to hazard a guess, it would probably be Customs. I think Customs certainly do patrolling in—

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Yes, it used to be Customs. I had been told by stakeholders that the Federal Police had been involved with monitoring of illegal fishing and crime gangs and the registering of their vessels in—

Mr Negus: Where it reaches the level of organised criminality, we certainly have in the past prosecuted people in that regard. But on that specific one—perhaps I could take it on notice.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: If you could, please, that would be good.

Mr Negus: Again, I think we have about 1,600 jobs active at any one time. It might be one of those that I am not aware of.

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

The AFP has not recently been, and is not currently involved in any activities relating to organised criminal elements in Malaysia and their alleged access to Australian fisheries where Patagonian Toothfish are present. The question of fisheries management and the prevalence of illegal fishing is best directed to the Australian Customs and Border Protections Service (ACBPS) or the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA).