

SENATE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL LEGISLATION COMMITTEE  
AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE

**Question No. 108**

**Senator Ludwig asked the following question at the hearing on 17 February 2006:**

Did the Australian Customs Service conduct any surveys of attitudes towards programmes run by their department in 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06 (to date)? If so, please provide all surveys conducted during that time period?

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

During June 2003 and February 2005 Customs conducted two user surveys of participants in the SmartGate trial, the automated border processing system using face recognition technology. The aim of both surveys was to measure how effective SmartGate had been from a user's perspective and identify areas where the process could be improved.

An overview of the results from the 2003 survey was provided to you in response to a Question on Notice taken on 25 May 2004.

An overview of results from the January 2005 survey are attached.

## **SmartGate User Evaluation Survey**

### **ACNielsen**

### **January 2005**

The aims of the ACNielsen survey were to measure how effective SmartGate has been from a user's perspective and identify areas where the process could be improved.

#### **AIRCREW**

In January 2005 ACNielsen undertook face-to-face interviews of over 1200 Qantas aircrew and found that SmartGate has proved to be an effective self-processing system for Qantas international aircrew. Few concerns were expressed by the crew regarding security or privacy with a majority of users regarding the system as easy to use and expressing a clear preference for the faster SmartGate process over the standard manual clearance process.

The key findings were:

- 98 per cent of Qantas aircrew who use SmartGate at least some of the time said that they would prefer to use SmartGate than manual processing when entering or leaving an Australian airport;
- Only 5 per cent of Qantas aircrew enrolled in SmartGate had any privacy concerns with using SmartGate; and
- Over half (58 per cent) of Qantas crew enrolled in SmartGate had suggestions for improving SmartGate. The main suggestions were:
  - Improve reliability (54 per cent); and
  - Install more kiosks for peaks (27 per cent).

#### **PASSENGERS**

In January/February 2005 ACNielsen undertook a user evaluation survey of Qantas Platinum Frequent Flyers. This online survey was undertaken by 1400 frequent flyers. The results of the survey were very similar to those from the Qantas crew survey in that few expressed concerns regarding security or privacy and the vast majority regarding the system as easy to use and expressing a clear preference for SmartGate over the standard manual process.

The key findings were:

- For those passengers who use SmartGate at least some of the time, 99 per cent said they would prefer to use SmartGate than manual processing when entering or leaving an Australian airport;
- Only 3 per cent of passengers enrolled in SmartGate had any privacy concerns with using SmartGate; and
- A third (33 per cent) of Qantas passengers enrolled in SmartGate had suggestions for improving SmartGate. Commonly reported suggestions included improvements to signage and instructions, and requests to widen the availability of the service to other airports and to outbound flights.