

SENATE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL LEGISLATION COMMITTEE  
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

**Question No. 141**

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

Please provide further information on the AFP's involvement with the Virtual Global Taskforce.

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

The Virtual Global Taskforce (VGT), established in December 2003, is an alliance of law enforcement agencies from Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States of America and Interpol working collaboratively on prevention initiatives to make the internet a safer place for children. The VGT is not an operational taskforce as it was formed to provide international strategic direction and prevention initiatives. Its purpose is to provide an international platform for information sharing including best practice and investigative methodologies.

The Australian Federal Police (AFP) through the Australian High Tech Crime Centre (AHTCC) represents Australia on this international taskforce. This representation involves attendance at and contribution to three Board meetings per year and participation in the various international prevention projects developed by the Taskforce. Australia has made the following contribution to VGT initiatives:

- financial contribution to the establishment and maintenance of the VGT website ([www.virtualglobaltaskforce.com](http://www.virtualglobaltaskforce.com));
- commitment and furthering of corporate industry and community agency partnership programme in Australia by signing on Telstra Bigpond;
- commitment to sharing good practice and prevention strategies with global partners through sharing current prevention initiatives in Australia; and
- leadership role in implementing the 24/7 online policing project.

It has been recognised globally that the issue of online child sex exploitation can not be effectively addressed by one agency or one country alone. The VGT works collaboratively with law enforcement, government agencies, non-government organisations and corporate industry. The success of the VGT has been recognised by the conferring of two recent awards:

- 2006 (February) Internet Industry Award, recognising developments in online safety, *Internet Service Providers' Association and Internet Watch Foundation*.
- 2005 (November) International Law Enforcement Cybercrime Award, recognising proactive and successful inter-agency collaboration with community partners in innovation and best practices pertaining to prevention, detection, and/or response to cybercrimes, *Society for the Policing of Cyberspace*.