

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS  
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

**Question No. 105**

**Senator Barnett asked the following question at the hearing on 23 February 2009:**

Given current economic circumstances and the looming recession, what measures have the AFP undertaken to position itself to respond to the security challenges facing Australia?

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

There is a lot of uncertainty as to how current economic circumstances may impact the security environment within Australia and overseas. A more difficult economic environment has the potential to impact the following crime types and challenges:

- corporate fraud, welfare fraud, employee fraud, insurance fraud and tax avoidance;
- opportunistic theft;
- identity crime;
- intellectual property crime as demand for counterfeit goods could rise;
- the requirement for peace and stability operations and assistance programs offshore depending on the impacts on vulnerable states; and
- displacement of populations leading to increase in people smuggling.

These crime types and challenges are not new to the AFP; neither is uncertainty in the security environment. The challenge for the AFP is to respond to changes in the security environment within a tightened fiscal environment. The AFP has undertaken a number of internal measures to ensure that our resources are being used as efficiently as possible and still able to be reallocated if priorities change.

For example:

- the AFP's flexible case prioritisation processes will continue to ensure optimal allocation of policing/investigative resources;
- a Joint Working Group on Employment Opportunities has been established including representatives from the AFP Association, the Commonwealth and Public Sector Union and the AFP to discuss staff affordability;
- the AFP has consulted with the Australian Crime Commission and the Australia New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency in relation to the economic downturn and its impact on crime; and
- the Federal Audit of Police Capabilities is currently underway which will assist the AFP's long term capability planning and resource management.

The AFP will remain vigilant to current economic conditions and its impact on the security environment. The AFP will seek to mitigate the effects of an economic downturn in consultation

with its whole-of-government partners while continuing to protect Australian interests and Australians from threats in the security and criminal environment.