

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
CRIMTRAC AGENCY

Question No. 112

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

The PFA also sought a commitment for funding to develop and establish the Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system. The Government gave its support for this prior to the election.

- a) What is the current status of the pilot program?
- b) Has the Government begun putting in place the necessary infrastructure to support the program?
- c) How will the ANPR assist in fighting crime and terrorism?

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

- a) In September 2008, CrimTrac concluded a whole-of-government scoping study into the national use of Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology and presented a draft scoping study report to the CrimTrac Board of Management for consideration.

A number of changes to the report, based on recommendations from the CrimTrac Board, have since been implemented and the final report was tabled at the CrimTrac Board's 39th meeting on 19 March 2009. The Board:

1. Noted the additional work undertaken by the ANPR project team and sponsoring group in response to the Board requests of 18 September 2008;
 2. Noted the final scoping study report; and
 3. Noted that the final report will be presented to the Federal Minister for Home Affairs by the end of March 2009.
- b) The final report has been printed and is to be delivered to the Minister for Home Affairs on 3 April 2009.
- c) The scoping study indicates that the use of ANPR in Australia could provide three main benefits:
 1. enhanced road safety, for example, by ensuring vehicle safety, monitoring driving behaviour and heavy vehicles, and detecting unregistered vehicles and unlicensed or disqualified drivers;
 2. more effective law enforcement, for example, by recovering stolen vehicles and number plates; and
 3. improved national security, for example, by ensuring the security of protected sites, and monitoring areas that might be associated with customs or immigration risks.

Research conducted in the UK suggests that the most common forms of arrests in which ANPR played a role were drug offences, unlicensed and disqualified driving, and vehicle crime.