

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

Sub Program 2.1.2

Question No. 47

Senator Barnett asked the following question at the hearing on 8 February 2010:

Not including operational matters, what is the structure and what are the protocols and procedures in place with respect to visits from dignitaries, like the President of the United States?

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

The Security Coordination Branch of Emergency Management Australia, a Division of the Attorney-General's Department, is responsible for the coordination of the protective security arrangements for visiting foreign dignitaries, including Guests of Government and visits by Internationally Protected Persons. The Security Coordination Branch works closely with other Australian Government Departments, the Australian Federal Police, and jurisdictional police.

The Security Coordination Subcommittee of the Australian Government Counter Terrorism Committee, chaired by the Security Coordination Branch, applies an intelligence based risk management process to determine protective security requirements and the allocation of Australian Government protective security resources for the protection of visiting dignitaries. The Security Coordination Subcommittee has a core membership including representatives from the Attorney-General's Department, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Australian Federal Police, Defence and the National Threat Assessment Centre.

The operational delivery of protective security measures for visiting dignitaries is the responsibility of the various jurisdictional police forces, including the Australian Federal Police in the ACT. Defence may also play a role for very high level visits or for significant events hosted by Australia.

For very high level visits a Security Working Group chaired by Security Coordination Branch is established to consider security issues at the State/Territory and National levels. The Security Working Group for a very high level visit will include representatives of the Security Coordination Subcommittee core membership agencies, supplemented as necessary by representatives from Infrastructure, Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, the Customs, Immigration and Quarantine agencies, and jurisdictional police.

The Security Working Group provides for a Whole of Government approach to information sharing and security planning for visits but does not override the established roles of individual agencies responsible for the operational delivery of security measures.