

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION SERVICE

Question No. 7

Senator Humphries asked the following question at the hearing on 12 February 2013:

Context only [Senator HUMPHRIES: Great. Could I just ask about a statement that the foreign minister made, when he was visiting Colombo, about measures to tackle people smuggling that were to be taken in concert with the Sri Lankan government. He made reference to a four-point plan, and a number of things were discussed in that: intelligence sharing, on-water disruption, advertising to the local population and reducing demand. To the extent that Customs is involved in those things, can you give us an indication of how much of that four-point plan has been implemented so far? ... (Refer to Hansard for Pezzullo and Dorrington response).]

Senator HUMPHRIES: In that regard the statement the minister made referred to additional surveillance and electronic equipment to help Sri Lanka's capacity to target smuggling operations and also to direct supply, presumably by Australia, of search and rescue equipment. What is the value of that equipment, approximately, and has it been supplied yet?

Ms Dorrington: It is my understanding that it has not been supplied yet. As to the potential value of that, I would have to take that on notice and get back to you.

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

A number of agencies, including Customs and Border Protection, are involved in ongoing discussions with Sri Lanka about capacity building initiatives. Customs and Border Protection has made no commitment for the provision of surveillance and electronic equipment, or search and rescue equipment, under the four-point plan.

Customs and Border Protection has previously provided IT and navigational equipment to the Sri Lankan Coast Guard along with associated training. Training has also been provided in conducting vessel searches (to the Sri Lankan Coast Guard and Navy) and drug and precursor chemicals.