

SENATE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL LEGISLATION COMMITTEE  
AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE

**Question No. 96**

**Senator Ludwig asked the following question at the hearing on 25 May 2006:**

- (a) During the period February - April 2001 was Coastwatch surveilling the waters between Indonesia and Christmas Island on a daily basis searching for Suspected Illegal Entry Vessels (SIEVs)?
- (b) If not, how regularly was Coastwatch patrolling the route to Christmas Island during this time?
- (c) Or were surveillance patrols only initiated when intelligence reports indicated a SIEV had departed?
- (d) Did Coastwatch receive any intelligence reports concerning the departure of the boat which was codenamed Gelantipy by DIMA prior to its sighting in the waters off Christmas Island on 27 March 2001? If so, can details of those reports be made available?

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

- (a) Coastwatch undertakes regular wide area surveillance on the basis of threat and risk assessments. Surveillance becomes more focussed when credible reports of a specific threat, such as a SIEV, are received. Provision of flight paths and patrol frequency could compromise future operational effectiveness and as such it would be inappropriate to provide such details.
- (b) Refer to answer (a).
- (c) Refer to answer (a).
- (d) In accordance with normal security conventions, Coastwatch will neither confirm nor deny the existence of intelligence reports.