

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Question No. 148

Senator Barnett asked the following question following the hearing on 27 May 2009:

In relation to the Air Security Officer program:

- a) are Air Security Officers armed,
- b) what is the budget for the Air Security Officer Program,
- c) is the Government committed to preserving the Air Security Officer Program,
- d) is the Government cutting the number of sky marshals by one-third on a number of international flights, and
- e) what cuts has the Government made to the Air Security Officer Program or on what basis has this decision been made? Is it based on security assessment or purely a budgetary measure?

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

- a) Air Security Officers are armed Australian Federal Police (AFP) officers who contain or resolve high-risk security incidents on targeted domestic and international flights.
- b) In 2008-09, the Air Security Officer (ASO) program annual appropriation was \$26.3 million. The annual appropriation for 2009-10 will remain the same.
- c) The AFP is not aware of any Government plans to discontinue the ASO program.
- d) There have been no cuts to ASO international deployments. Deployments are assigned according to an analysis of identified risks.
- e) No cuts in funding have occurred to the ASO program.