

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

Question No. 62

Senator Barnett asked the following question at the hearing on 26 May 2011:

So you have got a reduction of 169 [staff] from the last financial year and then another reduction of another 90 through to the 2011-12 financial year. Can you explain the decrease in those staff numbers and where they have been and where will they be removed from?

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

The reduction in ASL from 2009-10 to 2010-11 as reported in the 2010-11 Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements was 169 Average Staffing Level (ASL).

Part of this reduction is associated with a transfer of function to the Australian Tax Office for the administration of Excise Equivalent Goods (27 ASL) and specific efficiency measures announced in the Budget (41 ASL). Ongoing efficiency requirements and the need to fund pay rises account for the balance of the reduction. Reductions occurred across corporate areas and all Programs with the exception of *Program 4 – Civil Maritime Surveillance and Response* where there was a slight increase.

Customs and Border Protection expects to achieve a final ASL for 2010-11 very close to the 5,320 estimate reported at 2010-11 Additional Estimates. Efficiencies have been achieved by the application of intelligence based risk led approaches across Customs and Border Protection's operations with staffing reductions, wherever possible quarantining front line border protection activities.

The reduction in 90 staff from 2010-11 to 2011-12 is due to the net impact of the implementation of specific budget measures and the need to manage pressures over and above supplementation levels.

Specific Budget measures involving staffing reductions include:

- a reduction of 77 ASL will be achieved in 2011-12 - passenger facilitation; and
- a reduction of 4 ASL will be achieved in 2011-12 - illegal fishing in northern waters.

In addition there is a variety of factors also influencing final staffing estimates. These include factors such as the application of the efficiency dividend, the need to fund staff pay rises and supplier cost increases in excess of supplementation levels, movements in funding associated with policy measures approved in previous Budgets and funding growth provided under workload based funding agreements (i.e. for International Passenger numbers).

The reduction of 90 ASL from 2010-11 to 2011-12 will occur across the organisation with the exception of *Program 4 – Civil Maritime Surveillance and Response*. Staffing reductions have largely been managed through natural attrition with some targeted voluntary redundancies offered. Across recent years there have been no compulsory redundancies within the agency.