

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

Question No. 2

Senator Humphries asked the following question at the hearing on 29 May 2013:

Senator HUMPHRIES: You have mentioned that 551 officers had been tested for alcohol or drugs.

Mr Pezzullo: Yes.

Senator HUMPHRIES: Are those tests random and unannounced?

Mr Pezzullo: Yes.

Senator HUMPHRIES: How many officers are we talking about.

Mr Pezzullo: The head count of the service, including part-time employees, is around 5,600. Our average staffing level is 5,100—the full-time-equivalent workforce is 5,100.

Senator HUMPHRIES: So it is roughly 10 per cent of your full-time workforce. In a full year of operation, are you on average expecting to get through half or three-quarters of the workforce.

Mr Pezzullo: At the rate we are going—and in some cases we will be revisiting work areas and some people will be done several times during a financial year—I would anticipate that we would cycle through the entire workforce on a randomised basis, every 24 or 36 months. We are still working through the maths of that. The phase we are in—it is full drug and alcohol testing—is a pilot phase. I would like to review the results when the pilot ends—I will come back to you on the date that it ends, but I think from memory I decided the pilot would take us either to the end of May or June.

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

The Australian Customs and Border Protection Service Drug and Alcohol Testing Program commenced on 13 March 2013 and concluded on 31 May 2013. 568 officers were tested over this period.

It is expected that all officers in the Service would be drug and alcohol tested at least once every three years.