

SENATE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL LEGISLATION COMMITTEE
ASIO

Question No. 112

Senator Ludwig tabled the following questions on 31 October 2005:

ASIO Numbers, Costs and Procedures:

- (a) What is the current state of recruitment of officers into ASIO?
- (b) Prior to the recent announcement of a doubling of ASIO by 2010, were all available positions in ASIO filled?
- (c) Given the rapid growth and the largely inexperienced workforce, how are training and career issues being managed?
- (d) To what extent does ASIO rely on informants for information?
- (e) How reliable is the information received from informants?
- (f) How much has been spent on informants in the last financial year?
- (g) Does ASIO give DIMIA names of persons of interest to go on an alert list for people entering Australia at airports?
- (h) What is the procedure when a DIMIA official at an airport encounters an inbound passenger who has been flagged on an alert list?
- (i) Does the officer at the airport call the Entry Operations Centre?
- (j) Does the Centre then notify ASIO?
- (k) What does ASIO then do?
- (l) Is the DIMIA officer at the airport given instructions on how to proceed?
- (m) If so, does this always happen?
- (n) What is the DIMIA officer at the airports supposed to do if he/she doesn't receive any instructions?

The answer to the honourable senator's questions are as follows:

- (a) ASIO anticipates recruiting up to 250 new staff in FY05/06. As at 30 November, ASIO has around 1,000 staff.
- (b) No. Recruitment action was underway.
- (c) Training and development needs of all staff are regularly reviewed and updated through ASIO's Performance Management System with each officer establishing, in cooperation with their line manager, a personal development plan. ASIO delivers a corporate wide training and development program, which is reviewed and approved through the senior management group. Ongoing guidance on training priorities and direction is also provided by the Human Resource Development Committee which consists of managers and staff representing interests from across the Organisation.
- (d) Information derived from human sources is critical to the work of any security intelligence agency and an important supplement to that gained by other means. Equally it is among the most sensitive and no public comment is made on such sources.
- (e) Information received from any source, human or technical, can vary according to many factors. It is not possible to make a definitive statement on the overall reliability of

information from any source because it is assessed on a case-by-case basis. All information received by the organisation is carefully assessed.

- (f) ASIO does not publish financial data below Organisational level for reasons of security.
- (g) As outlined in ASIO Annual Report, ASIO lists identities of security concern in DIMIA's Movement Alert List (MAL) system.
- (h) DIMIA advises that the passenger will be referred to a DIMIA Airport Inspector, who examines the alert and makes a decision about whether or not to 'immigration clear' the individual for entry to Australia.
- (i) DIMIA advises that the Entry Operations Centre is called if that is required by the narrative in the MAL entry, or if the Airport Inspector requires assistance in identifying the passenger or advice on how to proceed.
- (j) DIMIA advises that if the Entry Operations Centre is unable to determine that the person can be cleared for entry, the agency who has provided the MAL entry will be contacted. So if ASIO has provided the entry, ASIO will be contacted.
- (k) ASIO does not publicly provide details on how matches to alerts are actioned.
- (l) DIMIA advises that in such a case, the Airport Inspector is advised to wait until the listing area or agency has determined whether or not the passenger can be cleared for entry. In some cases, further information may be required and this will be sought through the Airport Inspector.
- (m) DIMIA advises that these procedures cover all contingencies.
- (n) DIMIA advises that such a situation should not arise. The Entry Operations Centre is available to advise on a 24 hour basis, and gives priority to calls from Airport Inspectors.