

SENATE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL LEGISLATION COMMITTEE
AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE

Question No. 179

Senator Ludwig asked the following question at the hearing on 31 October 2005:

- a) What are Customs officers trained to look for in terms of tampered and fraudulent passports?
 - (i) Are there specific warning signs that are taught in training? If so, what are they?
 - (ii) Does it form a component of Customs officer training?
 - (iii) If so, how much time is allocated to it during training?
- b) Do you have figures on how many cases of tampered or fraudulent passports were uncovered by Customs officers at the point of disembarkation, when the passports were presented for checking?
 - (i) Of those, how many resulted in criminal charges or cancellation of visas?
- c) What capacity does SmartGate have for the detection of tampered and fraudulent passports?
 - (i) If there were specific warning signs taught in training for the Customs officers, could you indicate whether SmartGate is able to determine whether a passport meets any of those warning signs and, if so, which ones?
- d) Has the technology been rolled out at any other airports, either domestic or foreign?
- e) What is the next phase for the roll-out of SmartGate?
 - (i) What airports will SmartGate be rolled out to in the next phase?
- f) It is correct that SmartGate is scheduled for a roll-out at foreign ports?
 - (i) Has any testing been done at foreign ports so far?
 - (ii) If not, when is this intended to commence?

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

- a) Customs officers are trained to look for evidence of fraud or alterations to travel documents, including things such as photo substitution, changes to printing, damaged laminates and fraudulent stamps. Various technologies can be used to assist, particularly the fraudulent travel document detection system deployed at all points of entry.
 - (i) Customs officers look for signs of alterations and use the Fraudulent Travel Document Detection system to check passport security features.
 - (ii) Yes, Customs officers receive training by officers from the Department of Immigration and Migration and Indigenous Affairs.
 - (iii) The training time allocated to this aspect of the course is approximately 1 hour.
- b) Customs does not keep statistics on tampered/fraudulent passports referred to DIMIA and subsequently confirmed as fraudulent.
 - (i) Customs is not responsible for criminal charges or cancellation of visas in relation to tampered or fraudulent passports. The Department of Immigration and Migration and Indigenous Affairs undertakes this function.

- c) SmartGate will have the capacity to identify whether the chip contained in an ePassport has been tampered with or is fraudulent through the use of Basic Access Control and Public Key Infrastructure.
 - (i) The warning signs taught in training are associated with the Fraudulent Travel Document Detection system not SmartGate which will use the method described above to identify fraudulent passports.
- d) No.
- e) The rollout of SmartGate automated border processing capability is scheduled to commence in 2007. It is likely that the first three airports to receive SmartGate Series 1 will be Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne.
- f) No.
 - (i) No.
 - (ii) N/A.