

SENATE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL LEGISLATION COMMITTEE
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Question No. 226

Senator Stott-Despoja asked the following question at the hearing on 31 October 2005:

- a) How accurate would it be to say that the level of drug seizures is often an indicator of the amount of drugs available in the market, that is, as supply increases, so do seizures, and visa versa?
- b) If that is the case, is presenting an increase in seizures as a meaningful indicator of law enforcement success misleading? Wouldn't an increase in seizures, in many cases, be more a measure of failure than success?

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

- a) This statement is only partially accurate and was confirmed by a joint Australian National University/AFP study. In the short term, increased drug imports will result in more drugs being seized. More importantly in the long term, increased drug seizures have a depressing effect on the availability of drugs on the street. The Australian National University/AFP report explains this more fully.
- b) No. Refer to answer a).