

SENATE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL LEGISLATION COMMITTEE
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Question No. 228

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

A British confidential report that recently become available states that “*A sustained seizure rate of over 60 per cent is required to put a successful trafficker out of business*” and that “*anecdotal evidence suggests that seizure rates as high as 80 per cent may be needed in some cases*”. The report adds that: “*Sustained successful interventions on this scale have never been achieved*” (p. 73). Does the AFP agree with these comments?¹

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

A joint Australian National University/AFP study (a report of which is due to be published in an upcoming edition of the international journal *Addiction*), confirms that the number and size of drug seizures has an impact on the availability of drugs on the street. This study was not available at the time of the publication of the British report mentioned above.

It is difficult to place arbitrary figures relying solely on seizures rates on such matters. Other variables such as the circumstances of a seizure, the individuals arrested and the consistent success of prosecutions can also have a significant impact on a criminal syndicate’s ability to traffic illicit drugs.

¹ *SU Drugs Project: Phase I Report: Understanding the Issues* (13 June 2003) at <http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Guardian/documents/2005/07/05/Report.pdf>.