

SENATE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL LEGISLATION COMMITTEE
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Question No. 231

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

Do you think the drop in the supply of heroin has played any part in the increase in the supply of and demand for psycho stimulants such as methamphetamines?

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

There is no irrefutable evidence to indicate there is a direct link in the reduction of the supply of heroin and a reported increase in the supply of and demand for psycho stimulants.

However, the Australian Crime Commission's Illicit Drug Data Report 2003/04 states that while importations of powder amphetamines have continued, Chinese trafficking groups previously associated with heroin importations to Australia appear to have consciously sought to create a market for crystal methylamphetamine in Australia, indicated by a high number of larger seizures over the last three years.

Further, The National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre's Monograph on The Causes, Course, and Consequences of the Heroin Shortage in Australia found that, while it is difficult to clearly document changes in criminal activity among organised crime groups, heroin distributors in Australia appeared to be flexible, and possibly adapted to the reduction in heroin availability by switching to other drug distribution.