

SENATE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL LEGISLATION COMMITTEE
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Question No. 280

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

Could the AFP please provide more information on the Opal group:

- (a) What is its membership?
- (b) What are its functions and duties?
- (c) How much funding does it receive?
- (d) How much funding does it receive from the AFP?
- (e) Does it receive any other resources from the AFP?

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

(a) The Opal Group comprises the following agencies:

- Australian Federal Police;
- Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs;
- Australian Taxation Organisation;
- Australian Crime Commission;
- Australian Securities and Investments Commission;
- Australian Health Insurance Commission;
- Attorney General's Department;
- Australian Customs Service ;
- Centrelink; and
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

(b) The Opal Group was established to provide an operational focus to combat identity crime. This forum has wide government representation and seeks to provide clear and coordinated direction on issues of identity crime through information sharing and strategy development. The activity of the Opal Group includes the following:

- awareness raising;
- coordinated approaches to defeating and reducing identity crime by law enforcement;
- canvassing the need for a central repository for identity crime intelligence;
- it provides a forum for agencies to coordinate their efforts and provide a federal response at the operational level to defeat identity crime. For example, it arranged a National Day of Action in relation to passport fraud/crime; and
- the Opal Group continues to seek advice from authorities/experts on various methods of identity crime in order to increase the knowledge base of the Group so that representatives may make informed decisions when it comes to issues of identity crime.

(c) The Opal Group receives no funding.

(d) The AFP provides no funding to the Opal Group.

(e) The AFP provides secretariat support to the Opal Group. It also covers costs associated with hosting meetings such as venue hire and providing the Secretariat.