

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS  
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

**Question No. 81**

**Senator Barnett asked the following question in writing, following the hearing on 19 October 2009:**

In relation to the recent spike in asylum seekers entering or attempting to enter Australian waters;

- a) What additional Australian Federal Police resources have been assigned to investigate people smuggling over the past six months? Please provide details.
- b) is the Australian Federal Police adequately resourced to investigate the increasing number of cases of illegal boats, and
- c) What is the Australian Federal Police's involvement in investigating the source of people smuggling in overseas countries, such as Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Indonesia?

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

- a) From 1 July 2009, the Australian Federal Police (AFP) will receive a total of \$48.4 million (over four years) in additional funding to combat people smuggling. Under this funding, enhancements are being made to Australian and foreign law enforcement through increased resource allocation and targeted training opportunities. These enhancements will further support regional cooperation to improve intelligence collection, investigational capability, legislative awareness and information exchange to disrupt people smuggling activity, particularly offshore.

This funding is comprised of the following five New Policy Initiatives (NPIs) which were approved by Cabinet for AFP People Smuggling measures within the region:

- Development of Regional Law Enforcement Capacity – \$4 million over four years.
  - Enhancing Australia's approach to People Smuggling – \$2.6 million over four years.
  - Enhancing AFP Capability to Combat People Smuggling – \$10.4 million over four years.
  - Enhancing INP Capability – \$15 million over four years.
  - Enhancing AFP and Regional Capacity – \$16.4 million over two years.
- b) The AFP continues to participate in a multi-agency response to people smuggling investigations and prosecutions which is concentrated on the recent surge in people smuggling activity in the region, including the increased number of Suspected Illegal Entry Vessels intercepted in Australian waters.

As at 19 October 2009, there are eighty one AFP employees (full time equivalent) assisting with the investigation of people smuggling activity. Of the eighty one AFP employees, there are:

- Sixty eight employees are located with Australia;
  - Six operating on Christmas Island; and
  - Thirteen members located overseas.
- c) The AFP works cooperatively with overseas partners in Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Indonesia to target the organisers of people smuggling ventures. The AFP led People Smuggling

Strike Team (PSST) and the AFP International Network continues to provide significant support to foreign law enforcement agencies in their efforts to combat people smuggling activities in the region.

The PSST provides a centrally directed, highly mobile investigative capability against organised people-smuggling syndicates operating in Australia and overseas. The PSST consists of investigators, intelligence officers and financial investigators. The AFP is committed to a multi-agency approach to combat people smuggling and acknowledges the effectiveness of this model. PSST works closely with AFP overseas posts, Indonesian National Police and other foreign law enforcement agencies in the region.

The AFP International Network works closely with foreign law enforcement agencies in the investigations which result in prosecutions for people smuggling and related offences. The AFP International Network supports foreign law enforcement efforts to collect criminal intelligence in order to identify and prevent maritime ventures destined for Australia or disrupt criminal networks offshore. The establishment of a regional anti-people smuggling network through placement of AFP intelligence and investigations resources in key source and transit countries further supports offshore disruption, regional information exchange and Australian investigations objectives.

The AFP's strategic partnerships in the region have resulted in a number of arrests and disruptions to people smuggling ventures in countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Sri Lanka. Since November 2008, the disruption activities of Indonesian, Malaysian and Sri Lankan law enforcement agencies has prevented over 2,600 foreign nationals seeking passage to Australia.