

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Question No. 18

Senator Furner asked the following question at the hearing on 18 October 2011:

Senator FURNER: Would you update the committee on the status of the charges made in relation to Operation Rescue as well? I understand it was an international investigation into an online network of child sex offenders.

Mr Negus: I will ask Assistant Commissioner Neil Gaughan, who is the head of our high-tech crime operations, which covers child protection operations, to give you some details.

Mr Gaughan: Thanks for the question. Some of the matters in relation to Operation Rescue are currently before the court; in fact, that is the vast majority of those people. That said, there have been a couple who have been before the court at this stage who have actually pleaded guilty. Our experience with this particular crime type is that well in excess of 95 per cent of people plead guilty at the earliest opportunity. It is unfortunately about all the information we have. We can provide some further breakdown of the actual status of each offender, but we will have to take that on notice.

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

During Operation Rescue almost 200 suspected paedophiles were arrested and 230 children rescued from harm across the globe.

As part of Operation Rescue the AFP removed four children from harmful situations and arrested 31 suspected offenders.

The status of charges as at 2 November 2011 is as follows:

Number of convictions = 26

Number still before the courts = 4

Formal caution = 1

TOTAL = 31