

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS  
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

**Question No. 24**

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

**Senator LUDLAM:** ... What are you doing preventatively with offenders?

**Mr Gaughan:** Nothing specifically with offenders, I suppose. But we are also working with the telecommunications industry and the ISPs to block this type of offending material, which has been reasonably successful.

**Senator LUDLAM:** It does not get rid of it though and it does not stop people going looking for it. I am not disputing the value of all those other things. Specifically going to the issue of the people who are popping up, who you are prosecuting or who you suspect of doing this stuff, what is out there for rehabilitation and what is out there for therapy for whatever can be brought to bear on the people who are offenders?

**Mr Gaughan:** There are processes in place through the judicial process for dealing with offenders. It is not really a market that the AFP historically has been involved in whether it be for this crime type or any other crime type. That said, we are working with academia to actually try to come up with some solutions to break the offending cycle. That is the importance of what the VGT is doing in relation to some of the international conferences we have been hosting. One we are going to host in the UAE shortly will try to address some of those issues.

**Senator LUDLAM:** I will leave it there. It does not sound like it is part of your core business, but I just wonder, rather than me working through a maze of different departments and portfolios, whether you can pull out for us who is doing the work? Is it child protection at a state level or what do you do? ...

**Mr Gaughan:** We will take that on notice. I was just talking to Mr Wilkins, and between ourselves and the department we may be able to give you a steer of where, if any, action is being taken.

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

The AFP does not have a crime prevention role in educating/counselling child sexual exploitation offenders.

Rehabilitation programs, including sex offender treatment programs are the responsibility of State and Territory authorities. Corrective Services Departments organise programs that are offered to sex offenders while they are in custody and determine the eligibility criteria for participation in these programs. There are also community based sex offender programs which sex offenders may be directed to attend while they are on parole. Sex offenders on parole may also be directed to attend psychological counselling with psychologists who specialise in the treatment of sex offenders. The Commonwealth is not directly responsible for these programs.

The Virtual Global Taskforce (VGT), of which the AFP is currently the chair, is coordinating a conference in 2012. The intention is to run a stream which relates to the psychological effects associated to offenders/victims/officers in the online environment. As such, the AFP through the VGT is working closely with psychologists to ensure that the issue of offenders supported is addressed. Our primary focus in this area is to avoid recidivism and to put in place support structures to ensure they are emotionally equipped to deal with being labelled a child sex offender.

It may also be the case that some Non-Government Organisations run programs for offenders; however the AFP cannot confirm this.