

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS  
CRIMTRAC

**Question No. 20**

**Senator Ludwig asked the following question at the hearing on 18 November 2013:**

Senator LUDWIG: Going back to the earlier answer you gave in relation to the number-plate recognition software. You said it was a matter that was looked at way back in 2008. Is that correct?

Mr Smith: That is correct.

Senator LUDWIG: You had some preliminary findings back then. What happened to that? Why wasn't it progressed at that point?

Mr Smith: I was not present at the board decision, but I have had discussions with commissioners who were present and I have taken cognisance of the various minutes of the boards, going back through 2007 and 2008. Primarily, I think the best way to summarise the decision is that the investment was far too high. The risks were very extensive, because we were talking about a full national number-plate-recognition capability that would do all of the things you possibly could, but at a national level. Probably the best example you could use as an analogy is the one that is used in the UK, which is a single national system. It is a very extensive and intrusive system, and the board did not have the appetite at the time and did not approve that particular request. From recollection it was around a \$40 million investment at the time, and, anyway, at the same time quite a number of states and territories had extensive investments of their own that would have emulated the technology.

Senator LUDWIG: Is that summarised anywhere as a public document—the risks, the examination?

Mr Smith: I could not tell you whether there is a summary of it. My answer is based upon the determination of the board and the conversations I had with board members at the time. I could have a look to see whether there was any official announcement, but it was an internal process.

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

The ANPR scoping study conducted by CrimTrac in 2008 provided an examination of automatic number plate recognition capability and detailed the risks associated with such a capability. A copy of the full report has been provided to the Committee Secretariat.