

2nd October 2003


Mr Bob Charles MP
Chair
Joint Standing Committee of Public
Accounts and Audit
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Charles

During the appearance of the Australian Federal Police before the Joint Standing Committee of Public Accounts and Audit, Review of Aviation Security in Australia on 4 September 2003, the AFP took a number of questions on notice.

The responses to those questions are attached. I hope these responses are of assistance to the Committee.

Yours sincerely



M J Kealty

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT
REVIEW OF AVIATION SECURITY IN AUSTRALIA
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
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Chairman: Has anyone within the AFP examined the stun gun (taser) in relation to the air security program? (pg 42)

Answer:

- No

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Senator Watson: How has the Border Security Legislation Amendment Act 2002 impacted on AFP operations? (pg 45 & 51)

Answer:

The Border Security Legislation Amendment Act amended several Commonwealth Acts.

A number of new provisions were inserted into the *Customs Act 1901* and the *Customs Administration Act 1985* that had the potential to impact positively on AFP operations. These included:

- power for Customs officers to patrol airports;
- increased restricted areas in airports where unauthorised entry is prohibited; and
- a complementary power for officers (including protective service officers) to lawfully remove people from those restricted areas.

The combination of increased restricted areas and the capacity for lawful removal have enhanced the capacity of the APS to secure aviation facilities in locations where it has a counter terrorism first response role.

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Senator Watson: How is the Aviation Transport Security Bill 2003 likely to impact on AFP operations? (pg 45)

Answer:

The objective of the Aviation Transport Security Bill is to increase aviation security through a range of regulatory measures including centralised administration of security programs for aviation industry participants (eg, airlines and airports operators).

The Department of Transport and Regional Services (DOTARS) has carriage of the Bill and is conducting relevant consultation during passage. The AFP would need to assess any likely impacts on AFP operations in light of the final provisions.

The AFP would welcome further consultation on any proposed amendments to the Bill, and the Regulations.

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Senator Watson: Are emerging technologies – the backscatter centimetre wave x-ray screening etc and the biometric technology - being applied in each of the major airports and are they installed at each of the airports? (pg 46)

- Does the AFP intend to cover all airports with emerging technology? (pg 46)
- If the technologies are not installed, where does the AFP intend installing them? (pg 46)

Answer:

- The APS does not use biometric technology at the 11 airports at which it performs a Counter Terrorism First Response role.
- Bomb Appraisal Officers (BAO) at the 11 airports are equipped with Real Time Radioscopy 4 Portable X-Ray equipment. This equipment however, does not use backscatter centimetre wave x-ray technology.

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Chairman: *To the best of the AFP's knowledge has there ever been a terrorism incident with respect to aviation in Australia? (page 46)*

Answer

- No.

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Senator Watson: What role did the AFP have in the decision to move some families from the Australian compound in Bangkok, and what was the basis of the decision in the nature of the heightened security risk? And did that risk extend to the airport? (pg 51)

Answer

- As with all agencies attached to the Australian Embassy in Bangkok, the AFP was consulted throughout a review undertaken by Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).
- The decision to move all families from the Australian Residential Compound in Bangkok was made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade following a thorough review by officials from the DFAT. It may be more appropriate to direct this question to DFAT.
- The AFP is not aware of any risk to the Bangkok International Airport identified during the review.