

SENATE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL LEGISLATION COMMITTEE  
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

**Question No. 126**

**Senator Faulkner asked the following question at the hearing on 27 May 2003:**

How many Australian Federal Police officers were involved in the people smuggling group at the Australian Embassy in Jakarta?

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

Two.

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**Question No. 127**

**Senator Faulkner asked the following question at the hearing on 27 May 2003:**

What was Federal Agent Dixon's involvement in the people smuggling disruption program in 2001 as the AFP representative in the embassy?

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

As the AFP Senior Liaison Officer in Jakarta in 2001, Federal Agent Dixon attended meetings with other Embassy officials to formulate strategies to address the increased flow of illegal arrivals in Australia on vessels departing Indonesia. He also played some part in the gathering of information relevant to people smuggling activities, liaising with the Indonesian National Police and other authorities.

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**Question No. 128**

**Senator Faulkner asked the following question at the hearing on 27 May 2003:**

Were any AFP officers present at a meeting at 0800 hours at the Jakarta Embassy on Wednesday, 13 June 2001, which was a briefing by Ambassador Smith and the inter-agency people smuggling group, the number of officers and who they were?

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

Yes. Two Federal Agents were present at that meeting; Federal Agents Dixon and McEwen.

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**Question No. 129**

**Senator Faulkner asked the following question at the hearing on 27 May 2003:**

Could you advise the Committee as to when you spoke to Federal Agent Dixon about the meeting of June 2001?

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

I spoke with Federal Agent Dixon about the nominated meeting following discussions with Marion Wilkinson and issues raised by her on and subsequent to 14 August 2002. I believe it was during the second week of September 2002.

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**Question No. 130**

**Senator Faulkner asked the following question at the hearing on 27 May 2003:**

Did you seek further information or briefing concerning this meeting on Wednesday 13 June 2001 from Federal Agent Dixon? Could you advise as to what the date was of the brief provided by Federal Agent Dixon to the Director International?

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

My recollection of a brief having been provided by Federal Agent Dixon to the Director International is incorrect.

Federal Agent Dixon appears only to have discussed the matter with his superiors after it was raised in a series of questions provided to the AFP by Marion Wilkinson during July 2001.

On 1 August 2002, Federal Agent Dixon met with other AFP members and discussed the questions. A summary of that meeting was prepared and it was this written document that I ultimately saw.

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**Question No. 131**

**Senator Faulkner asked the following question at the hearing on 27 May 2003:**

Apart from the brief that was generated by Federal Agent Dixon, are you aware of any other communication that the AFP has had on this issue, either internally or from another government agency?

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

No.

The AFP did, however, brief the Minister for Justice and Customs on 19 August 2002 that it had participated in the interview with Marion Wilkinson. The Minister was further briefed on 26 September 2002 that Ms Wilkinson had, on 11 September 2001, sought further particulars about the June 2001 meeting in Jakarta.

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**Question No. 132**

**Senator Faulkner asked the following question at the hearing on 27 May 2003:**

Did you visit Indonesia approximately five days after the protocol was cancelled?

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

The Indonesian National Police (INP) advised the Australian Federal Police on 11 September 2001 that the protocol would be set aside. I travelled to Indonesia and met with the INP on 17 September 2001.

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**Question No. 133**

**Senator Faulkner asked the following question at the hearing on 27 May 2003:**

Will the AFP seek permission of the Indonesian police to release the INP/AFP MOU [dated 5 August 1997] and Protocol [dated 15 September 2001]?

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

*Interim response*

An approach has been made to the Indonesian National Police to consider the request.

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**Question No. 134**

**Senator Faulkner asked the following question at the hearing on 27 May 2003:**

Were tracking devices placed on asylum seeker vessels by the Indonesians, in the knowledge of the AFP?

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

No.

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**Question No. 135**

**Senator Faulkner asked the following question at the hearing on 27 May 2003:**

Were there AFP agents involved in the interview or seeking statements or telephone conversations in relation to survivors from the SIEV X?

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

As stated in the response to question on notice number 137, AFP Liaison Officers enlist the assistance of host law enforcement agencies for investigative purposes.

On hearing of the sinking of SIEV X, an AFP member in Jakarta contacted the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), as the survivors had been placed in its care. The AFP member was advised that a survivor had indicated a desire to speak with Australian police. A subsequent telephone conversation, through an IOM staff member, took place where information about the vessel, passage and the sinking were provided to the AFP member.

This conversation was informal and at the request of the survivor. That survivor has since been located and has provided a formal statement to the AFP.

On 23 October 2001, two AFP members accompanied INP and Interpol personnel where the INP interviewed two survivors. The AFP members were observers during this interview.

Since that time, a team of AFP investigators from Australia has been locating and interviewing survivors.

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**Question No. 136**

**Senator Collins asked the following question at the hearing on 27 May 2003:**

Could the AFP explain references in AM and CNN programs of 23 October in which an IOM spokesman was quoted as saying “the captain reported that the boat was having major engine problems and the boat was taking water...”?

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

No. However, the survivors immediately went into IOM care. They may have made such reports.

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**Question No. 137**

**Senator Collins asked the following question at the hearing on 27 May 2003:**

Do you know when the AFP has been involved in interviews of the Indonesian fishermen that rescued the SIEV X survivors?

What detail was taken as to the location at which survivors were rescued as a consequence of those interviews?

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

The AFP/DIMIA People Smuggling Strike Team (PSST) has, and continues to, undertake an investigation concerning people smuggling offences committed by person who arranged the ill-fated SIEV-X venture. As part of this investigation the PSST has located and interviewed 48 persons who were either concerned with or were survivors of the SIEV X disaster. These witnesses have been located in Australia and seven foreign countries and have provided signed statements to the PSST investigators. Some information relevant to the fishing vessels or crew that rescued survivors has been provided. The AFP is currently pursuing this information and a number of avenues of inquiry. As these investigations are ongoing it would be inappropriate to make further comments.

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**Question No. 138**

**Senator Collins asked the following question at the hearing on 27 May 2003:**

Could you advise from the AFP end why the Navy may be denying that any investigation into the company that owned SIEV X had occurred?

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

When the AFP was asked by Senator Collins on 20 November 2002 to detail the nature of the investigations to ascertain where precisely the SIEV X did sink, the question was taken on notice and became QoN 58.

When obtaining information to provide a response to the question, advice was received in relation to comments made by RAN personnel at the Australian embassy in Jakarta that enquiries had been made about SIEV X. Due to a misinterpretation, it was concluded (incorrectly) that the enquiries related to the "company that owned SIEV X", as stated in the response to QoN 58.

Since that time, the situation has been clarified and it is believed that RAN personnel were making enquiries with the harbourmaster in Jakarta to ascertain a name of the vessel if possible.

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**Question No. 139**

**Senator Greig asked the following question at the hearing on 27 May 2003:**

Could you tell us how many investigations of trafficked women or allegations of trafficked women did not proceed – because the witnesses were deported before thorough investigations could take place?

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

None. Whilst potential witnesses / victims being removed from or voluntarily leaving the country before being spoken to by police creates difficulties for investigators, in all instances where allegations have been referred to the AFP by DIMIA, this has not been the sole reason for matters not proceeding.

In several instances, the AFP has made contact with potential witnesses / victims in their home countries and they are assisting in ongoing investigations.