

substantial development aid and, in extremis, through situations such as we have seen in recent years in East Timor, providing support of a military nature to ensure that people can live in a safe situation. So the responses can vary markedly, but I think it is fair to say that these issues are very topical and are discussed, and there is an acute consciousness of the issues that need to be addressed.

Senator COONEY—The UNHCR, by its very name, is very limited in the approach it takes in this area. Has the department got any material on this?

Mr Metcalfe—Last year was the 50th anniversary of the refugee convention. The UNHCR held a ministerial council meeting late last year—in December, from memory—and has been through a substantial process which is close to finalisation of so-called global consultations, where it is consulting with the state parties, with NGOs and with academics as to future work in this area. To the extent that we have that material, I would be only too happy to make that available to the committee.

Senator COONEY—By its very nature it must be confined to the consideration of refugees in terms of the convention, I would have thought.

Mr Farmer—No. In fact, the global consultations have gone more broadly than the refugee category. That is because of exactly the sorts of phenomena you have been talking about. You have, in many cases, what you would call mixed flows of people—people looking to migrate, refugees and people being trafficked. So the consultations have tried to look at this broad question of movement of people to see the ways in which not so much the convention but the systems that have grown up under the convention have proved their relevance or the ways in which contemporary events show that they might need some revision. I would say that—without blowing our trumpet—Australia, in the multilateral area, has long established a reputation for intellectual input into the future of the national system. That is certainly the case in relation to the global consultations.

Senator COONEY—There is a certain amount of discussion about refugee policy in the community, which you may have noticed. A lot of it seems to me to be based on people talking past each other and there seems to be no common currency in the language, in many ways. Obviously, the argument is based on our responsibilities to the world and how the world is going. Has the department—I am not saying it should, because it is an arm of government—thought at any stage of at least clarifying those terms and issues in a way so that people around the world could understand them? You get people locked up in containers in France and England and people are getting very upset in France—at least, in Australia, we know what they are getting upset about. What is happening there?

Mr Farmer—There has been quite a lot of work on those, if you like, definitional issues, including work by Australia. We would be happy to make some of that material available to you. We could go through and see what might be of interest.

[6.08 p.m.]

CHAIR—We have completed consideration of matters pertaining to output 1.2. Senator Faulkner advises me that the issues he wishes to pursue are located in output 1.3 so we can progress to that quite logically now without having to revert to the general area, as far as I understand.

Senator FAULKNER—I thank you and the committee for your courtesy and assistance. I have had to attend a funeral in Sydney. I really do appreciate the fact that the committee has

been able to assist me in this way. Mr Farmer, could you outline the involvement of your department in the joint People Smuggling Strike Team?

Mr Metcalfe—The joint AFP strike team?

Senator FAULKNER—Yes. I understand that there are DIMIA officials involved in the joint People Smuggling Strike Team. Could you brief us on that?

Ms Siegmund—The strike team has been operating for approximately two years. It is a joint agency strike team as you have mentioned, comprising 10 officers from the Australian Federal Police and five from DIMIA. The five from this department are made up of four certified IV investigators and one intelligence analyst.

Senator FAULKNER—Four certified investigators?

Ms Siegmund—All of the investigators operating within the Commonwealth are required to have qualified with their certificate level IV training. The four that we have with the AFP are officers who have undertaken that training.

Senator FAULKNER—They are DIMIA officers?

Ms Siegmund—Yes, they are.

Senator FAULKNER—They may have come from other agencies?

Ms Siegmund—No, they have come from within the department. We currently have an officer who has come from DIMIA investigations in New South Wales. Another is from Queensland and the others are from central office.

Senator FAULKNER—What is the role of the DIMIA officers in the strike team?

Ms Siegmund—Part of the advantage and rationale of having a joint agency strike team was to bring together the strengths and skills of both agencies to try to tackle the issue of investigation and ultimately prosecution of people-smugglers. From a DIMIA perspective we have brought with us a very detailed and intimate knowledge and understanding that we have built up over the last several years of what the people-smuggling environment has been like, what the smugglers' modus operandi has been, what experience we have had in building up intelligence and information on the whole issue, and a knowledge of immigration law and the migration and citizenship acts and so on. As an agency we have extensive experience in working in an interdepartmental capacity. We have worked with a number of agencies over the many years I have been in the department and it is something we are familiar with. We rely on cooperation with other agencies in many areas.

Senator FAULKNER—This is Canberra based?

Ms Siegmund—It is centrally located, but the team is quite mobile. In other words they can go out to different locations to take witness statements or to investigate further.

Senator FAULKNER—Who is the lead agency? I asked this of the AFP and I wondered about DIMIA's view of who the lead agency is.

Ms Siegmund—Under the original cabinet decision the AFP have taken administrative responsibility in terms of the funding arrangements, and the strike team is physically located within AFP headquarters in Canberra. The team manager of the strike team is also an AFP officer. However, there is also a structure within the arrangements for what is called a board of management. That comprises a senior officer from the AFP and me, and any investigation proposals and plans must be submitted to the board of management for agreement and approval, including the nature of the operation, what the outcome will be, how long it will

take, what resources it will utilise and so on. Because I am a member of that board of management that obviously gives us equal partnership, if you like, in terms of determining priorities for investigations and a clear knowledge of what the teams are actually doing.

Senator FAULKNER—I knew you would say that. It is similar to what that AFP said. Is there a lead agency? There may not be; I do not know.

Mr Metcalfe—We do regard it as a joint strike team. While there is an AFP lead in terms of the day-to-day management, in terms of overall issues it is a joint effort, and Ms Siegmund as the relevant branch head is our representative in relation to that.

Senator FAULKNER—Are you and the AFP the only agencies involved?

Ms Siegmund—In the actual joint agency strike team, yes. But we obviously work very cooperatively with a range of other agencies in terms of a whole-of-government approach to tackle people-smuggling, so there will be contacts with other agencies along the way. But the actual investigations are only conducted with the AFP and DIMIA officers.

Senator FAULKNER—What other agencies do you work with in that collaborative way?

Ms Siegmund—We work with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade through their officers at post, with Defence and with a range of other agencies within the law enforcement and intelligence community—anyone and everyone that can provide us with any relevant information that they see would assist us. That may involve state police as well if they want to provide us with information they think is relevant to the people-smuggling issue.

Senator FAULKNER—Who does the strike team report to?

Ms Siegmund—The structure at the moment is that the team manager reports to the board of management which, as I said, comprises myself and a senior AFP officer.

Senator FAULKNER—Who does the board of management report to then?

Mr Metcalfe—The board of management then reports through the relevant departments ultimately to the ministers: Senator Ellison, on the one hand; and Mr Ruddock, on the other.

Senator FAULKNER—So in DIMIA's case, does the board of management report directly to Mr Ruddock?

Mr Metcalfe—Ms Siegmund is a branch head within a division and so, through the departmental structure, ultimately would report to Mr Ruddock, but the secretary, Mr Moorhouse and I all have a role to play.

Senator FAULKNER—Have you actually got any intelligence units at all? I do not know whether I am using the correct terminology but it seems broad enough.

Mr Metcalfe—We have a section within Ms Siegmund's branch known as the intelligence analysis unit which was established a couple of years ago—we could give you a more precise date. It has a particular focus on people-smuggling and it seeks to draw together information from the various sources and produce reports that can then be used in our efforts to deal with that situation.

Senator FAULKNER—Can you explain to me the difference between the strike team and the intelligence analysis unit so I get an understanding of the different roles, please?

Ms Siegmund—Of course, Senator. As Mr Metcalfe has mentioned to you, the intelligence analysis section is based within the border protection branch in DIMIA. It has responsibility for gathering a very broad range of information and intelligence then trying to analyse that,

value add to it and, ultimately, come out with some intelligence product or analysis of what all of that would mean from a DIMIA perspective. The joint agency strike team uses intelligence product and information to drive its investigations—to take them that one step further of actually operationalising, if you like, that information or intelligence. It may then set up a formal investigation and hopefully have a prosecution as one of the outcomes.

Senator FAULKNER—How many staff do you have in the intelligence analysis unit?

Ms Siegmund—It is led by a section head. Below that there are five assistant directors and then a team of analysts who are broken up on a geographical basis.

Senator FAULKNER—Who is the section head of the intelligence analysis unit?

Ms Siegmund—Mr Antony Pollock.

Senator FAULKNER—There are five assistant directors under Mr Pollock.

Ms Siegmund—Yes.

Mr Metcalfe—In public service terms, Mr Pollock is an executive level 2 officer and the assistant directors are executive level 1 officers.

Senator FAULKNER—Fair enough. And below that?

Ms Siegmund—Below that is a series of analysts and administrative support staff. The teams are broken up on a geographical basis. For example, you would have areas that would specialise in the Middle East, China, Africa or the South Pacific. Those analysts then specialise in gathering information about those geographic locations. There are 19 staff altogether in this section.

Senator FAULKNER—Are you able to say what the areas covered by the teams are?

Ms Siegmund—Yes, I can. The areas are the Middle East pipeline and the rest of the world, which we then divide into subsections including China, the Pacific region and a region that covers Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand and Malaysia. We have a separate area that does coordination. We produce a series of daily information bulletins regarding, for example, interdictions at the airport, and so we have a separate section that coordinates how those reports are pulled together from all the Australian airports and how they are distributed.

Senator FAULKNER—So you do not have anything dealing with Indonesia, for example?

Ms Siegmund—Yes, I am sorry. Indonesia is one of our major subsections too.

Senator FAULKNER—Is that included in one of the others or is it separate?

Ms Siegmund—It is a separate subsection. If you like I can perhaps provide you with an organisational chart.

Senator FAULKNER—If you would not mind, that would probably save us a bit of time which would be of benefit to everyone, I suspect.

Senator COONEY—It would be.

Senator FAULKNER—I know how quickly you move through your questioning, Senator Cooney. In the last 12 months, has the department been particularly actively engaged with Indonesia, countering people-smuggling? Obviously, there has been a great deal more focus on that, and we have heard about that from a range of agencies. I think it is well known to anyone who turns on a television or a radio. I just wonder if, in the broad, Mr Metcalfe or Mr

Farmer, you could just very briefly outline the prioritisation that this issue now has within your department.

Mr Metcalfe—It has a very significant order of prioritisation, but it obviously takes its place among other work and relationships that we have. For example, within the Australian Embassy in Jakarta, we have three full-time A-based staff working on the broad issue of immigration fraud and compliance, and people-smuggling issues form a subset of that. We obviously work closely with other Australian agencies in relation to that issue. We have also worked very closely with our counterparts in Indonesia at the Indonesian immigration department—Imigracia. There have been a number of high-level exchanges and areas of cooperation, and over the last couple of years quite a mature working relationship with Indonesian immigration has developed at a number of levels, including the post level in Jakarta. Their director-general has visited Australia on one occasion, I have visited Jakarta on a number of occasions and the secretary has visited Jakarta. One of the outcomes of the discussions that Minister Ruddock and other ministers had in Jakarta in September last year was the establishment of a number of cooperative working groups. One of those dealt with immigration issues, and we have met on three or four occasions with Indonesian immigration officials to discuss areas of mutual cooperation.

Senator FAULKNER—Does this high-level activity includes ministerial activity?

Mr Metcalfe—Yes.

Senator FAULKNER—In the last calendar year, would you be able to say how many ministerial visits there were to Jakarta and when they occurred?

Mr Metcalfe—I will check that. Mr Ruddock was certainly in Jakarta in September and then in Bali in February for the multilateral conference involving 34 ministers, I think, from a range of countries in the region and elsewhere. He met with Indonesian ministers on that occasion as well, of course. I will have to check my records but, from memory, I have been to Jakarta on three or four occasions in the last year. The secretary has been to Indonesia accompanying the minister.

Senator FAULKNER—Wasn't the minister there in June or July last year as well?

Mr Farmer—I do not believe so, Senator.

Mr Metcalfe—We can check on that.

Senator FAULKNER—I just had a vague memory of that.

Mr Metcalfe—I think he may have been there earlier last calendar year, but we can check on that. When I said that the relationship is maturing, I think that there is evidence of that on a range of fronts, in a number of bilateral and multilateral forums. For example, Indonesia works with Australia in relation to APEC forums and areas of developing cooperation relating to business travel. Those are not necessarily related to combating people-smuggling but they go to the broad area of immigration cooperation. Mr Killestyn was in discussions with Indonesian colleagues last week on areas of further cooperation. I think this week or next week we are conducting some fairly substantial training courses for a number of immigration officers from Indonesia on document fraud issues—how to identify fraudulent documents and how to use modern equipment. So there is a breadth to the relationship that has arisen out of the working group and earlier efforts, and it is obviously a strong focus for us.

Mr Farmer—I have been corrected: Mr Ruddock did go to Indonesia in the middle of the year, in the context of a visit to Indonesia and Vietnam.

Senator FAULKNER—Do you know what month that was, Mr Farmer?

Mr Farmer—It was June.

Senator FAULKNER—I thought that was the case. Would you be able to provide the ministerial itinerary for that visit—not for the other ones?

Mr Farmer—I will certainly ask Mr Ruddock. I cannot see any problem. Is your interest the people he saw there?

Senator FAULKNER—I would like the itinerary, yes. I would like as much detail as you are able to provide.

Mr Farmer—Is your interest just in his itinerary in Indonesia or do you want the one relating to the Vietnam part of the trip?

Senator FAULKNER—I would be happy for you to limit the question to Indonesia if that would save work. You know I am always interested in saving departmental resources where appropriate. Do you have a good working relationship with the AFP in relation to these activities that Mr Metcalfe is speaking of?

Mr Farmer—I think the commissioner and I have made it clear to both our organisations that we expect a very close working relationship in this whole area. We have instituted arrangements which involve very high-level regular periodic contact between the two organisations. The deputy secretary of the department and the deputy commissioner meet to essentially talk about issues of common concern and they, of course, go more broadly than this issue.

Senator FAULKNER—Sure. I will conclude on this question: are there any memorandums of understanding or protocols or other guidance or documentation that govern your operations in Indonesia?

Mr Farmer—Are you talking just about immigration or about government operations more broadly, including the police?

Senator FAULKNER—I am interested in government operations more broadly, but I am talking to DIMIA and I do not expect you to answer for every other agency. I only expect you to answer for yourselves, but any information you can happily provide from a whole-of-government perspective would be appreciated.

Mr Farmer—We will try to be as helpful and as full as we can, if you like.

Senator FAULKNER—That is genuinely appreciated but I am specifically interested in your own operations and what guidance you have.

Mr Metcalfe—I mentioned earlier the working groups that were established. They were established following the ministerial discussions last September, and we will check and I will take that on notice and come back to you. I recall that there was some documentation in the form of a media release or some form of communique from the Australian and Indonesian sides about the fact that—

Senator FAULKNER—Yes, but I am looking more to find out what other guidance is available in relation to how you conduct your activities in countering people-smuggling in Indonesia and whether it comes by the joint People Smuggling Strike Team or by the intelligence analysis unit or by any other DIMIA operations, either onshore in Indonesia or Australia based. I would be very interested to see such guidance. Thank you very much for your cooperation.