JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON AUSTRALIA'S IMMIGRATION DETENTION NETWORK

Q125

Question: What response did DIAC put in place after withdrawal of those high-order public order management federal police from the island? Was a local security management response discussed amongst the three organisations at your regular meetings?

Answer: There were and continue to be a number of formal mechanisms in place to review and ensure that security and other client facility management issues on Christmas Island are communicated on an ongoing and regular basis to the relevant stakeholders. This includes the Inter-agency Coordination Committee and the Security Working Group both of which have representation from the AFP.

Following the withdrawal of the AFP Organisational Response Group in November 2010, the AFP maintained the ability to rapidly deploy specialist capacity to Christmas Island within 24 hours if required.

In recent months Serco has increased its rapid response capability including the number of Emergency Response Teams (ERT) that can be deployed.

Supplementary Response to 125 and 127:

On 17 November 2010, senior departmental staff were advised by the Australian Federal Police (AFP) that the continued deployment of ORG officers to Christmas Island was unsustainable due to competing operational priorities, and that the withdrawal of these officers would commence on 27 November 2010.

In response to this decision, the department and Serco implemented a number of risk management strategies including:

- Ensuring ongoing and visible staff engagement in client compounds to reassure clients and remind them of appropriate behaviour (including room searches to identify and remove any contraband items);
- Enhancing meaningful activities within the limitations of a high population; and
- Increasing mainland transfers to facilitate the movement of appropriately cleared longer-term clients to suitable mainland facilities.

Additionally, shortly after the incident commenced in March members of CISSR (Council for Immigration Services and Status Resolution) were invited to assist in engagement with clients.

The Department worked closely with the key stakeholders such as the AFP to ensure that they were appropriately briefed on the operational situation in the detention facilities.

The decision to review the AFP presence is a matter for that agency.