

31 AUG 2015
12:55

Richard Marles MP



Ms ROACH
FOR CONSIDERATION +
DISCUSSION

30 August 2015

Mr Grant Hehir
Auditor-General for Australia
Australian National Audit Office
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Dear Sir,

I write to ask that you investigate the training that has been provided to officials within Australian Border Force (ABF) since its inception on 1 July this year.

On Friday 28 August, ABF announced that it was participating in Operation Fortitude along with Victoria Police, Metro Trains, Yarra Trams, the Sheriff's Office, and the Taxi Services Commission.

As part of this announcement a press release was issued by ABF which quoted Don Smith, ABF regional commander for Victoria and Tasmania, saying that: "*ABF officers will be positioned at various locations around the [Melbourne] CBD speaking with any individual we cross paths with*".

This gave rise to significant community anxiety leading to the cancellation of Operation Fortitude later that afternoon.

What is concerning to me is the lack of understanding about the legal powers of officials of ABF which these comments appear to betray.

Accordingly, I would request that you undertake an investigation in relation to the training that has been provided to officials of ABF as part of its inception, specifically as to:

- a) the powers that officers of ABF possess; and
- b) the circumstances in which these powers can be legally exercised.

ABF is less than two months old and the events of Friday have brought this important entity into ridicule. It is essential that ABF becomes an organization that is able to engage in genuine self-criticism and analysis as well as one that has fair and reasonable dealings with clients, and well trained and supported staff. For this

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Federal Member for Corio

reason, an investigation of these issues by you at this early moment in the life of ABF is critical.

I look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Richard Marles".

Richard Marles
Shadow Minister for Immigration and Border Protection