

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ARTS

SUB PROGRAM 2.3: TELSTRA CORPORATION LIMITED

QUESTION

Senator Alston asked the following Question on Notice:

5. Could you guarantee that no parliamentarians, who have had dealings with COT members, have had their phone conversations bugged or taped by Telecom?

ANSWER

These matters are currently being investigated by the AFP and AUSTEL, and by Telecom itself.

It would be inappropriate for Telecom to make any further comments at this stage about possible breaches of the Telecommunications (Interception) Act while the matter is before the Federal Police. However, the Minister will be making a full statement in the near future on action taken to date to remedy apparent procedural problems within Telecom.

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QUESTION

Senator Alston asked the following Question on Notice:

9. Who authorised the taping of COT members' phone conversations and how many and which Telecom employees were involved in either the voice recordings, transcribing the recording or analysing the tapes?

ANSWER

See answer provided to Question 5.

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QUESTION

Senator Alston asked the following Question on Notice:

10. On what basis is Telecom denying copies of tapes to those customers which it has admitted to taping?

ANSWER

Requests from two of the customers have been received by Telecom. The customers have been advised that the original tapes have been handed to AUSTEL under direction and in accordance with advice from the Attorney General's Department. AUSTEL has since passed the tapes to the AFP.

These tapes were originals and no copies have been made by Telecom. Therefore, Telecom is unable to provide copies of the tapes. No transcripts were ever prepared.

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QUESTION

Senator Alston asked the following Question on Notice:

11.

- (a) How many customers has Telecom recorded as having had their phone conversations taped without their knowledge or consent since 1990?
- (b) Of these how many were customers who had compensation claims, including ex Telecom employees, against Telecom?

ANSWER

See answer provided to Question 5.

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QUESTION

Senator Alston asked the following Question on Notice:

15. Why did Telecom breach its own privacy guide-lines and how will it ensure that the revised guide-lines currently being devised by the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman will not be open to similar breaches or abuses?

ANSWER

See answer to Question 5. The Minister for Communications will be making a comprehensive statement on all of these matters in the near future, after further consultation with Telecom and other relevant parties.

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QUESTION

Senator Alston asked the following Question on Notice:

20. How many customers who have alleged that Telecom has tapped or bugged their phones without the consent or knowledge are the Australian Federal Police currently investigating?

ANSWER

See answer provided to Question 5.