



FOI Request FA 22/02/00502

Question:

The Australian Border Force (ABF) has the power to examine an individual's phone at the border without a warrant, including making them provide their passcode/password. There have been recent media reports of examples of this power being exercised. I request documents containing the following data:

A: The number of times an individual's phone has been examined by ABF at the border

B: The number of times an individual's phone has been examined by ABF at the border involving the individual providing their password/passcode

C: The number of times an individual's phone has been examined by ABF at the border involving ABF making copies of some or all of the individual's data

D: The number of times an Australian citizen or permanent resident's phone has been examined by ABF at the border

E: The number of times an Australian citizen or permanent resident's phone has been examined by ABF at the border involving the individual providing their password/passcode

F: The number of times an Australian citizen or permanent resident's phone has been examined by ABF at the border involving ABF making copies of some or all of the individual's data

1: In 2017: A, B, C, D, E, F

2: In 2018: A, B, C, D, E, F

3: In 2019: A, B, C, D, E, F

4: In 2020: A, B, C, D, E, F

5: In 2021: A, B, C, D, E, F

Answer:

Between 1 January 2017 and 31 May 2020, 40,459 individual traveller examinations were performed where an 'Electronic Examination' was specified, or the word "Phone" was present in the examination notes. Of the 40,459 examinations, 17,085 were recorded as Australian Citizens. (Note: these results may also include other electronic device types such as removable storage drives.)

In May 2020 a new reporting system was implemented which can identify examinations of mobile phones by the ABF at the border and some of the details requested. This system does not record details of citizenship or residence. This is not required for ABF purposes.

During the period 2017 to 2021 some of the detail is not recorded in a reportable or searchable format as it is not required for ABF purposes or would require significant resources to provide to the level of detail requested.

A: The number of times an individual's phone has been examined by ABF at the border - [see table/figures below](#). Caveat: 1 January 2017 to 31 May 2020 - where an 'Electronic Examination' was specified, or the word "Phone" was present in the examination notes. Post May 2020 – details in table.

B: The number of times an individual's phone has been examined by ABF at the border involving the individual providing their password | passcode - [\(The information is recorded within free-text fields, which is not in a searchable format\)](#). This information is not reportable for ABF purposes.

C: The number of times an individual's phone has been examined by ABF at the border involving ABF making copies of some oral/ of the individual's data - (The information is recorded within free-text fields, which is not in a searchable format). Post May 2020 – figures below.

D: The number of times an Australian citizen or permanent residents phone has been examined by ABF at the border - see table/figures below. (Caveat: where an 'Electronic Examination' was specified, or the word "Phone" was present in the examination notes.

E: The number of times an Australian citizen or permanent residents phone has been examined by ABF at the border involving the individual providing their password/passcode - see table/figures below. (Caveat: where an 'Electronic Examination' was specified, or the word "Phone" was present in the examination notes. This level of detail is not reportable for ABF purposes.)

F: The number of times an Australian citizen or permanent resident's phone has been examined by ABF at the border involving ABF making copies of some or all of the individual's data - see table/figures below. (Caveat: where an 'Electronic Examination' was specified, or the word "Phone" was present in the examination notes. This level of detail is not reportable for ABF purposes.)

Table – 1 January 2017 to 31 May 2020:

| Count of EXM Examination Number | Column Labels | | Grand Total |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Calendar year | Australian citizen | Other | |
| 2017 | 4,097 | 5,565 | 9,662 |
| 2018 | 5,196 | 7,227 | 12,423 |
| 2019 | 6,196 | 8,731 | 14,927 |
| 2020 | 1,596 | 1,851 | 3,447 |
| Grand Total | 17,085 | 23,374 | 40,459 |

Figures –1 June 2020 to 31 December 2021:

- Q4. In 2020 (May-Dec):
 - A - 129
 - B - 129
 - C - 34
- Q5: In 2021:
 - A - 822
 - B - 822
 - C - 270

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