



MEDIA RELEASE

Minister for Justice & Customs

Senator the Hon. Amanda Vanstone
Senator for South Australia

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CrimTrac - international technology to fight crime

"Australia will benefit significantly from the new National Automated Fingerprint Identification System being built by the major French IT company Sagem," the Minister for Justice and Customs, Senator Vanstone said today after a visit to SAGEM's Research and Development Site in France.

"The work under way in France, the United States and Australia will deliver a world class fingerprint and palm print identification system for all Australian police forces by early next year".

"It is the Federal Government's vision, through CrimTrac, to provide this type of leading edge technology to fight crime and make Australia safer".

"I have met with Sagem officials and they have assured me that they are confident the new system will be running on time. They are well aware of the importance of CrimTrac".

"Establishing the new system will require the conversion in the United States of Australia's 2.4 million fingerprint and palm print records to the new international 'grayscale' standard. This is a much more accurate way of comparing fingerprint and palmprint evidence".

"The new system will also enable police to collect electronically fingerprints and palm prints from suspects and offenders. This is a much faster and accurate process which will replace the difficult and time consuming inking techniques which have been in place for decades."

Senator Vanstone received detailed presentations by Sagem on the new fingerprint system, the future of fingerprint technology, and other advances in technology relevant to law enforcement and customs.

"As a leading supplier to police forces worldwide, SAGEM has invested extensively in research and development".

"I am keen that Australia benefit from these and other technological advances in law enforcement" Senator Vanstone said.

"We must keep up with technology and work collaboratively with international companies to ensure Australian law enforcement is never left behind".

"Following my briefings by Sagem, I am even more convinced that the Federal Government's \$50m CrimTrac initiative will deliver very impressive results for Australia's police services.

"Criminals should definitely be worried".