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Senator Sarah Henderson
Chair
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee
PO Box 6100
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Senator

The Department of Home Affairs and the Australian Border Force appeared at the Additional Senate Estimates Hearing of the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee on Monday, 14 February 2022.

In my capacity as Deputy Comptroller General, Group Manager Customs, Australian Border Force, I gave evidence to the Committee. I have reviewed the Hansard record and have become aware of the need to correct a response I made to Senator Abetz.

The particular reference for correction is on Hansard at page 91 (14/02/2022), in response to the following question from Senator Abetz:

Is the Border Force able to provide an update on the amount, in dollar value and in kilograms, of illicit tobacco seizures, year to date, for the 2021-22 fiscal year?

My response to this question was, in part:

For financial year 2021-22, as at 31 December 2021, the Australian Border Force has seized 145.9 million cigarettes and 19.3 tonnes of loose-leaf tobacco. That equates to a potential duty evasion of \$193.7 million. The 2020-21 financial year figures: 194.4 million cigarettes and 65.5 tonnes of loose-leaf tobacco; duty evasion, approximately \$312 million.

The response inadvertently quoted figures for seizures made by the Illicit Tobacco Task Force, rather than by the whole of the Australian Border Force. I am providing the following correction of evidence in response to this question:

For financial year 2021-22, as at 31 December 2021, the Australian Border Force has seized 373.9 million cigarettes and 415.9 tonnes of loose-leaf tobacco. That equates to a potential duty evasion of \$1,078.1 million. The 2020-21 financial year figures: 598.4 million cigarettes and 827.1 tonnes of loose-leaf tobacco; duty evasion, approximately \$1,923.4 million.

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I appreciate the opportunity to provide this clarification, which will ensure that the correct information is provided to the Committee.

Yours sincerely

Vanessa Holben
Deputy Comptroller-General
Group Manager Customs
Australian Border Force

25 February 2022