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AUSTRALIAN BORDER FORCE**

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY SPOKEN QUESTION ON NOTICE

Joint Standing Committee on Trade and Investment Growth

Inquiry into the understanding and utilisation of benefits under Free Trade
Agreements

23 August 2024

QoN Number: 3

**Subject: Ways in which the Digital Verification Platform will ensure Certificate
of Origins are authentic**

Asked by: Richard Colbeck

Question:

Senator COLBECK: Where are you at in terms of the trial work you are doing, and what are the next steps?

Ms Vithanage: We are conducting some incremental trials around the digitally verifiable certificate of origin and giving assurance to our partners around the authenticity of it.

Senator COLBECK: What are the key markers in that? What are the tools that we are using to give confidence to our partners?

Ms Vithanage: That it's in fact authentic?

Senator COLBECK: Yes.

Ms Vithanage: I will have to take the technical answer to that on notice. My understanding is that it's about details around issuing authority, issuing agency, relevant seals, signatures and so on. The intent of the digital verification platform is to give the assurance to the receiving agency that it is in fact a verified document, and then that it does not require the interaction between issuing agencies to confirm that the certificate of origin is actually accurate.

Answer:

The Digital Verification Platform (DVP) is a tool that supports Australia's transition to paperless trade by promoting and testing the acceptance of digital trade documents with key trading partners. The DVP enables an Australian issuing authority to transform trade documents into digitally verifiable documents, also known as Verifiable Credentials (VCs). This enables the document to be verified as authentic, reducing the need for paper versions to be provided to various government and industry intermediaries throughout the cross-border trade process.

In terms of Certificate of Origin (CoO), this allows a receiving customs authority to trust that an Australian issued CoO presented to them is valid, has not been tampered with and has been signed by the authorised Australian issuing body. We are currently engaging with partner countries on the next phase of DVP trials.

The verification process can be done in one of three ways by a receiving customs authority, subject to their systems and processes:

- Scanning the QR code on a printed or electronic CoO by using an electronic device such as a phone
- Uploading the CoO to the DVP through an internet browser
- Verifying the CoO using their local system.