



Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

Mr Tim Bryant
Committee Secretary
Senate Economics Legislation Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Bryant

Inquiry into the Coastal Trading (Revitalising Australian Shipping) Bill 2012 and related bills

I refer to your email of 17 May 2012 providing the proof Hansard transcript of evidence of the Committee's hearing held in Canberra on 15 May 2012. I can advise that I have no corrections to the transcript in relation to my evidence which appears on page 10.

I attach some additional material for the Committee's information in response to a Question on Notice from Senator Cameron.

Please contact me should the Committee require anything further.

Yours sincerely

Colette Shelley
Branch Manager
Workplace Relations Policy Group

22 May 2012



I want to know that the department did in relation to 'ships of shame' and the reports that were widely in the media about workers being treated almost as slaves on those ships. Can you take that on notice and provide the committee details of what the department did, what the department knew and what instructions, if any, were given by government to deal with this issue.

From 2002 the then Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (the Department) provided information and briefing to then Ministers and their Offices in relation to issues surrounding foreign-crewed ships trading on the Australian coast. The Department obtained information from discussions with industry parties and other Commonwealth agencies and from media reports.

These issues related to ships once owned and licensed in Australia being sold, registered to foreign owners, then returning to operate with foreign crews on the Australian coastal trade through permits issued under the *Navigation Act 1912*. On return, the crew of these ships were not required to be paid Australian wages as these foreign corporations were not respondent to the Maritime Industry Seagoing Award 1999 (MISA). The most notable of these cases related to CSL Pacific Shipping (CSL).

The maritime unions strongly opposed the practice used by CSL and made application in the Australian Industrial Relations Commission to have CSL made a respondent to the MISA. The Department's briefings of the Minister included providing support for the Minister's intervention in the CSL matter opposing the application.