



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department

**Security and Critical
Infrastructure Division**

05/18657

29 November 2005

Mrs Margaret May MP
Acting Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

BY FACSIMILE: 6277 2219

Dear Madam Acting Chair

Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection

I refer to the Committee's hearing of the Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection (the Convention) held on 7 November 2005.

I note during the hearing I undertook to advise the Committee of the capacity of current equipment operated by the Australian Customs Service (Customs) to detect explosives.

I have been advised by Customs that they currently have a range of equipment capable of detecting traces of explosives. Customs also has a number of machines (selected ion flow tube mass spectrometers, SIFT-MS) which the manufacturer advises are capable of detecting the chemical markers, DMNB, o-MNT and p-MNT, which are the prescribed markers included in the Technical Annex to the Convention. These machines are located at container examination facilities in each of Australia's major cities. Customs are currently investigating their capacity to purchase portable machines for detection of marked plastic explosives.

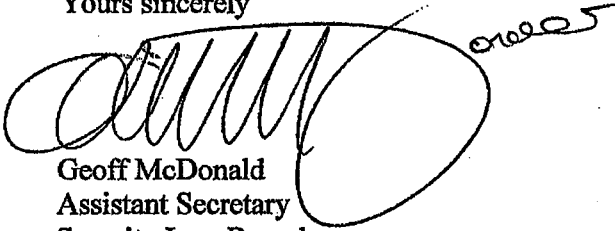
I would also like to make a clarification to my statement at the hearing (at TR20 – 2nd paragraph) as follows:

the legislation commences 12 months after the legislation gets royal assent...

I would like to clarify that at this stage it is proposed that the legislation commences immediately upon Royal Assent. However, there is a proposed provision providing a 12 month delay for commencement for manufacturers of plastic explosives.

Should the Committee wish to discuss this matter, please contact Annabel Knott who can be contacted on 6250 5423.

Yours sincerely

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G McDonald', with a date '29/11/05' written in the upper right corner of the signature.

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