

May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2002

The Secretary  
Joint Committee of Public Accounts & Audits  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir,

**Review of Australia's Quarantine Function**

I wish to make a brief submission to the abovementioned review on behalf of the Independent Paper Group (IPG).

The IPG was formed some two and one half years ago to provide independent views to Governments on a range of industry policy and environmental issues. The group is comprised of seventeen senior executives of independent paper merchants, overseas mill agents and importers, supplying approximately two-thirds of the Australian paper market from a wide range of countries around the globe – these papers being worth well in excess of \$1.5 billion per annum. Most, if not all, of the paper is supplied via containers through seaports around Australia – the majority being entered via the Sydney and Melbourne ports. A list of IPG members is attached and further information is available on our website at [www.independentpapergroup.com](http://www.independentpapergroup.com).

Put in the above context, you will appreciate that the revised quarantine and inspection procedures have the potential for adverse impacts, in terms of additional costs and container clearance times, upon our membership. In this regard, some members have expressed concerns with the increased levels of inspections and costs over the past six months, as well as the substantial differences in cleaning costs between ports.

While recognising the importance of, and need for, tighter quarantine controls and inspections to prevent the entry and spread of foot and mouth and other diseases, we believe that the revised arrangements should be carried out in accordance with world best practice – taking into consideration the need for cleaning costs to be kept in line with the much lower cleaning costs pertaining at overseas ports, and be uniform at all Australian seaports.

For our part, IPG members have been conveying AQIS requirements to their overseas principals to ensure that containerised paper leaving their premises/ports meet with these requirements.

Finally, I should add that our members have had a number of meetings and contacts with AQIS officials over the recent period and it must be said that AQIS have listened to our concerns and have made endeavours to accommodate them, whilst at the same time being mindful of their overriding quarantine responsibilities.

I shall be happy to provide any further information should the Committee require it.

Yours Faithfully,

TONY WOOD  
President  
Independent Paper Group