

# INDUSTRY WORKING GROUP ON QUARANTINE

P.O.Box 657 , MASCOT NSW 1460  
2 Hayes Road, ROSEBERY NSW 2018  
Telephone: (02) 9364 7260 Bus (02) 99672486 AH 0413 050 127 Mobile  
Facsimile: (02) 9364 7340 Bus (02) 9958 5956 AH e-mail aiccc@affa.gov.au

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The Committee Secretary  
Joint Committee on Public Accounts and Audits  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Attention Dr. John Carter

Dear Dr. Carter

## JPCAA Enquiry into Quarantine Effectiveness

The Industry Working Group on Quarantine (IWGQ), represented by Messrs Beaver and Morris, appeared before the Committee on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2002 in Sydney and during the hearing a number of questions were taken on notice.

The IWGQ's responds to these questions as follows:

Page 180: Senator Scullion “ ***In regards to ballast water – and I note that you have mentioned it in your submission and have had comments to make in regard to it – I have had it put to me that the voluntary ballast water system has not changed a thing. We have managed to talk about it fir the last decade and we have had lots of meetings and lots of groups but nothing has happened. Some 105 million cubes of water – or whatever it is – are put into this country’s waterways every year. In effect, we are still building ships that do not have any circulating systems and we have not met any of the recommendations that have been made by the steering committees. Nothing has been done. As an industry working group, what do you say to that? Do you think that is a reasonable assessment of the situation?***”

“The IWGQ, through its secretariat, has been involved in ballast water issues in relation to the initial funding of research projects. Latterly it participated in the development of the Decision Support System as a member of the steering committee overseeing timely completion of the project in time for the introduction of mandatory ballast water management requirements in July 2001. These requirements make it mandatory for vessels to manage international ballast water prior to entering Australia’s 12nm limit. The enforcement of these requirements is a task the AQIS seaports program is undertaking and it is suggested that compliance data may be obtained from AQIS.

The IWGQ has no comment on the issue of vessels still being built that do not have any circulation systems apart from being aware that the exchange of ballast water at sea is currently the only approved treatment method by the IMO.

Page 180: Senator Scullion “ ***On the same area, in the industry working group what levels of discussion do you have? It has been put to us in evidence by the Environmental Protection Agency in Queensland that 100 per cent of the biofouling that comes in on hulls of vessels is in fact undetected, because the quarantine barrier appears to end at the waterline. What levels of discussion has your industry group had in regard to that concern?”***”

“The National Introduced Marine Pests Coordination Group (NIMPCG) was appointed to deal with all marine pest issues including ballast water and hull fouling. NIMPCG comprises representatives from each State and the Northern Territory, shipping and port industries, scientific organizations and relevant Commonwealth agencies. Shipping Australia, a member of the IWGQ, and the Minerals Council of Australia represent industry on the committee. Industry concerns are communicated through this process.”

Page 181: Senator Watson “ ***A number of questions from our colleague Senator Scullion were taken on notice. Regarding the same theme, you say we are world leaders in the development and management of protocols for the handling of ballast water. Can Australia really act alone on ballast water discharge? For example, can we require ballast water to go into special discharge tanks for treatment? Is that practical?”***”

“Whilst it would be better to have an internationally accepted protocol to deal with ballast water Australia can go it alone as it has.

In relation to the question on special discharge tanks for treatment the IWGQ is not able to provide comment as it is outside its area of expertise.”

Page 183: Chairman “***I am going to ask you to take on notice another question about ballast water. I do not know why you do not know the answers to these questions since you mentioned the issue in your submission. It is my understanding that there are current protocols that deal with ballast water at port of entry and when vessels are in transit – that is, outside the 200-mile limit, or whatever. It is our understanding that, once you clear port of entry, vessels can then jurisdiction hop or port hop as many times as they like, and nobody checks to see whether or not anything happens to the ballast water between the various cities or ports. Is that your understanding?***”

“International vessels report their ballast water position to AQIS prior to entry, including their intention for discharge and the Australian ports they intend to visit. An inspection is undertaken at the vessels’ first port of call, and approval for discharge is granted on the basis that the international ballast water has been managed for all ports of call in accordance with the Australian protocol. There is a compulsory requirement to report any changes to ballast water detail or discharge intentions to AQIS after the vessel has been cleared at the first port of arrival”

Should the Committee require further information please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned

Yours Faithfully  
Industry Working Group on Quarantine

H. Krtschil  
Secretariat