

## **QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**

**ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING : 23 February 2015**

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

**(AE15/048) - Asbestos - Programme 1.1 Border Management (ACBPS)**

Senator Xenophon, Nick (L&CA 86) asked:

Senator XENOPHON: Further to the line of questioning from Senator Carr about asbestos from China and Russia in particular, you have taken some questions on notice in respect to asbestos in cars. In terms of asbestos in plasterboard, cheap plasterboard coming in from China, given that in the building industry you break it up and the fibres are loosened, what assurances can you give that that plasterboard containing asbestos will not be allowed into this country, given the risks it poses to those working in the building trade and, indeed, to anyone who does any DIY renovations?

Mr Quaedvlieg: I will respond in two parts. I will take a question on notice in relation to some statistics around plasterboard importations in particular, because I do not have those figures to hand. Secondly, I will respond verbally by indicating and paraphrasing the same response I gave to Senator Carr in that we certainly apply an intelligence-led model to interceptions and working with industry in terms of high-risk countries and industries. In the context of plasterboard from China I have hit both of those particular risk indicators. So, my sense, without having the statistics before me, is that we were doing significant work around the plasterboard importations from China but I would have to take the stats of that on notice.

*Answer:*

Plasterboard can be classified to a number of different tariff classifications. These tariff classifications also cover a number of items other than plasterboards; therefore it is not possible to provide accurate numbers on plasterboard imports from China. However, as plasterboard importations from China are of higher risk of containing asbestos, we work closely with industry sectors to ensure that goods are asbestos free before exportation. In particular we may require importers to provide the results of independent assessments by individual hygienists that the goods are free of asbestos.