

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES – 26 – 27 MAY 2014

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(BE14/020) PROGRAMME – Australian Customs and Border Protection Service

Senator Singh (L&CA 81) asked:

Ms Grant: ...So we do a range of work to try to detect asbestos in goods crossing the border. The sorts of goods that we have detected asbestos in are automotive spare parts, three-wheeled motorbikes, drilling fluid, equipment for the mining sector, locomotives, as I said, and some fire wallets.

Senator SINGH: Over what time frame are you providing me with those various cases?

Ms Grant: I would have to take that on notice. They are just examples of the things we have found during the course of our work in recent times.

Answer:

Ms Grant highlighted several examples of contaminated goods detections. The Australian Customs and Border Protection Service (ACBPS) made a number of those detections during Operation XYLEAN, which ran from June 2010 to July 2011. The Operation focused on the importation of asbestos contaminated goods in the mining and energy sectors. Since then, the rate of asbestos detections in imported goods connected to those industry sectors has declined significantly.

ACBPS continues to review its approach to asbestos importation to ensure compliance outcomes. Recent risk assessment activities have resulted in ACBPS turning its attention to other sectors including the automobile industry. This work has resulted in the detection at the border of asbestos in imported vehicle spare parts, which subsequently led to recalls of passenger vehicles from China that were already in the Australian market. Our compliance program includes education campaigns and refining our targeting activity to account for some specific countries of origin and suppliers. We continue to work closely with a range of high-risk industry sectors including mining and energy to ensure that goods are, in fact, asbestos-free before exportation to Australia. Some companies have employed Australian expert hygienists to inspect and certify goods at their place of manufacture, prior to shipment to Australia. Some overseas suppliers have changed their manufacturing practice.