

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING : 23 May 2017

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(BE17/144) - Illicit tobacco seizures - Last five years - Programme 3.1: Border-Revenue Collection

Senator Pratt, Louise (L&CA 104) asked:

Senator PRATT: You may have been asked this already, but can you detail how much illegal tobacco or tobacco products you seize each year?

Mr Outram: Looking at the 2016-17 financial year—and this data runs until 28 February, I should say; that is the latest quality assured data I can give you—the total equivalent weight across tobacco and cigarettes was, in sea cargo, 147 tonnes. We also seized 37 tonnes in international mail, making 184 tonnes. In the 2015-16 financial year, we seized 64 tonnes, but that excluded, as I recall, international mail. We did not collate the data around international mail. To give you a sense of the number of cigarettes, in 2015-16 that was 44 million cigarettes, or sticks. This year to 28 February, it was 111 million cigarettes—that is in sea cargo. I will go to international mail now. This year to 20 February there were 26 million cigarettes or sticks. That gives you a sense of the number—

Senator PRATT: It is enormous!

Mr Outram: and the size of the seizures that we are getting in air cargo and sea cargo.

Senator PRATT: If you could give us on notice that information for the last five years or so, that would be great.

Mr Outram: I have that here. Rather than read it out, I can give it to you on notice.

Answer:

Table 1 shows the amount of tobacco detected in the Sea Cargo stream from 1 July 2012 to 30 April 2017.

Table 1 – Tobacco detections (Sea Cargo) from 1 July 2012 to 30 April 2017

	Financial year				
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016–17 (1Jul–30Apr)
Tobacco (tonnes)	183	183	151	29	105
Cigarette sticks (millions)	200	147	40	44	154
Equivalent weight (tonnes)*	344	301	182	64	229

* Equivalent weight represents the total weight of loose leaf tobacco detections together with the total weight of cigarette sticks (calculated using an average weight per stick).

Table 2 shows the amount of tobacco detected in the International Mail stream from 1 January 2016 to 30 April 2017. International Mail data on illicit tobacco was not collated prior to 1 January 2016.

Table 2 – Tobacco detections (International Mail) from 1 July 2015 to 30 April 2017**

	Financial year	
	2015-16	2016–17 (1Jul–30Apr)
Tobacco (tonnes)	7	17
Cigarette sticks (millions)	14	32
Equivalent weight (tonnes)*	18	43

* Equivalent weight represents the total weight of loose leaf tobacco detections together with the total weight of cigarette sticks (calculated using an average weight per stick).

** A nationally consistent process for the collection of tobacco detections through international mail was introduced on 1 January 2016. Data on detections prior to this date is unavailable due to concerns with data quality.

Table 3 shows the approximate amount of tobacco detected in the Air Cargo stream from 1 July 2015 to 30 April 2017. Statistics are only available from 1 July 2015.

Table 3 – Tobacco detections (Air Cargo) from 1 July 2015 to 30 April 2017**

	Financial year	
	2015-16	2016–17 (1Jul–30Apr)
Tobacco (tonnes)	28	82
Cigarette sticks (millions)	12	74
Equivalent weight (tonnes)*	37	141

* Equivalent weight represents the total weight of loose leaf tobacco detections together with the total weight of cigarette sticks (calculated using an average weight per stick).

** These estimates are indicative only and based on preliminary data which is subject to revision.