

SENATE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL LEGISLATION COMMITTEE  
AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE

**Question No. 122**

**Senator Ludwig asked the following question at the hearing on 17 February 2006:**

- a) Since 2 December 2004, has any contraband been found in empty containers?
  - i) If so, please detail the finds
- b) In those cases, was the contraband the subject of a controlled delivery?
- c) Where were the containers bound (import or export)?
- d) What was the outcome of the contraband find mentioned in the reply to Question 153 from 2 December 2004?

**The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:**

- a) There have been no significant finds in empty containers since 2 December 2004.
- b) Not applicable.
- c) Not applicable.
- d) The detection at the port of Fremantle, on 3 June 2004, of 644kg of cannabis leaf concealed in the floor of an empty sea cargo container was analysed in detail by Customs and the AFP. Both agencies concluded in late December 2004 that the detection was an abandoned shipment of cannabis not intended for Australia. The cannabis was grown in the Middle East and intended to be shipped to Europe, possibly to Germany, through the Belgian port of Antwerp. The traffickers appear to have lost control of the shipment, which ended up in Australia after several unrelated shipping movements. By the time the cannabis was detected in Australia, the container was too far removed from the time and region of the original drug shipment to allow identification of the traffickers.