

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS  
AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE

**Question No. 69**

**Senator Ludwig asked the following question at the hearing on 13 February 2007:**

Regarding the Tourist Refund Scheme:

- 1) Is there an estimate available on the amount of funds that would otherwise be eligible for a refund that are not claimed?
  - i) If so, could Customs please provide this?
  - ii) If not, why not?
- 2) Why is the cut-off of half an hour prior to a flight for the lodgement of a tourist refund scheme necessary?
- 3) Where is Customs up to in regards of the review of the operation of the TRS generally?

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

- 1) No.
  - i) Not applicable.
  - ii) Customs has no way of determining the number of travellers who fail to participate in the scheme despite being eligible to do so.
- 2) In designing the Tourist Refund Scheme, Customs was required to address the diverse interests of a wide range of stakeholders including airport owners, airlines, retailers and travellers. As the on-time departure of international flights is critical to the operational efficiency of international airports, Customs agreed with stakeholders that refunds would only be available until 30 minutes before the aircraft is scheduled to depart. This is to ensure that TRS operations do not result in flight departures being delayed.
- 3) Customs does not currently have a review of the operation of the TRS underway.