

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION SERVICE

Question No. 15

Senator Ronaldson asked the following question at the hearing on 12 February 2013:

Senator RONALDSON: So Customs has been requesting the sort of action that we finally saw in December 2012 for at least three or four years. Are you able to say why this was not done earlier?

Mr Pezzullo: No, Senator, because it is intrinsically tied up with the point I have taken on notice, which is what is, at least in broad terms, the nature of the advice that has been provided to ministers over the time—

Senator RONALDSON: Minister, do you know why this was not done earlier, given that this has been an issue within Customs for some time—indeed, these recommendations for mandatory reporting and drug and alcohol testing have been put forward on numerous occasions before. Are you able to say why it took until December of last year for the legislation to be introduced?

Senator Ludwig: What I can do is seek advice from the relevant minister and ask them whether they can add anything to the answer.

Senator RONALDSON: When was Minister O'Connor first advised of these police and other investigations?

Mr Pezzullo: I don't know. I will have to take that on notice. By the time I was appointed the interim CEO, Mr Clare, was in the chair.

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

The first record of Minister O'Connor being formally advised of the police and other investigations was on 22 September 2009. The correspondence was about the suspension of a Customs and Border Protection officer who was present at premises subject to an Australian Federal Police search warrant on 20 September 2009.