

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

**Question No. 72**

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

In relation to cargo inspections: Given the Minister for Home Affairs' announcement on 12 February 2012 that the Government has asked the Australian Crime Commission to conduct a National Intelligence Assessment of the illegal firearm market and its links to gang activity.

1. Has the Government offered any additional resources to Customs to stop illegal weapons, specifically firearms from coming through air or sea cargo consignments?
2. Can you provide an update of the amount of sea and air cargo consignments that are coming into the country?
3. What percentage are being examined and physically inspected?

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

1. Customs and Border Protection utilises an intelligence-led risk-based approach to direct its resources to the highest priority of risks, and has strengthened its targeting regime at the border to enhance opportunities to make detections of illicit firearms. This includes the development of a firearms intervention strategy in 2012 and the creation of a dedicated Firearms Intelligence and Targeting Team. Customs and Border Protection has increased collaboration with state, territory and federal law enforcement partner agencies on intelligence assessments relating to illicit firearms trafficking across the Australian border. This approach increases each agency's respective access to intelligence and information holdings, with joint investigations enabling agencies to more effectively target entities and facilitate a whole of government response to breaches of commonwealth and state or territory legislation.

In March 2013, the then Prime Minister announced that \$30.2 million would be provided to Customs and Border Protection over 2 years from 2014/15 to establish a National Border Targeting Centre (NBTC). The NBTC will provide stronger and nationally coordinated operational targeting of high risk international passengers and cargo that supports a whole of government approach to combating gang violence and organised crime. In preparation for 2014/15, Customs and Border Protection and partner agencies have commenced foundational work to strengthen collaboration, co-ordination and interoperability.

2. The below table details sea and air cargo import volumes from 2010/11 to 2012/13 year to date.

	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13 YTD</b> (to 31 Jan 2013)
<b>Number of imported air cargo consignments reported</b>	13,972,886	18,411,278	16,509,016
<b>Number of imported sea cargo manifest lines reported</b>	2,519,341	2,618,183	1,680,389

3. The below table details sea and air cargo inspections from 2010/11 to 2012/13 year to date.

<b>Sea Cargo inspections</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13 YTD</b> (to 31 Jan 2013)
<b>Number of TEU (twenty foot equivalent units) inspected</b>	101,889	102,247	60,714
<b>Percentage inspected</b>	4.04%	3.91%	3.61%
<b>Number of TEU examined</b>	14,227	14,544	8,606
<b>Percentage examined</b>	0.56%	0.56%	0.51%

<b>Air Cargo inspections</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13 YTD</b> (to 31 Jan 2013)
<b>Number of consignments inspected</b>	1,528,590	1,513,678	868,529 (includes import/exports)
<b>Percentage inspected</b>	10.94%	8.22%	5.26%
<b>Number of consignments examined</b>	73,793	80,592	50,231
<b>Percentage examined</b>	0.53%	0.44%	0.30%

**Inspection definition** – Inspection may include the use of non-intrusive examination such as x-ray technology (static or mobile), trace particle detection and detector dogs.

**Examination definition** - Physical examination of the cargo by a Customs and Border Protection officer.