

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE

Question No. 47

Senator Barnett asked the following question at the hearing on 26 May 2008:

Provide particulars on the meeting with the tourism industry.

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

The meeting referred to was a regularly scheduled meeting of the Passenger Facilitation Taskforce with industry representatives. The meeting was held in Cairns on 25 June 2008.

Changes to the rate of the Passenger Movement Charge were on the agenda: discussion was brief.

Industry representatives recorded their view that the increase to the Charge was not viewed favourably, and that neither the mechanism for adjustment nor the attribution of the Charge were transparent to industry. Clarification was also sought as to whether the Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs had proposed any amendments to the legislation.

Industry comments about the increase, attribution and transparency were noted by the Department of Finance members of the Taskforce. Customs advised that no legislative amendments had been recommended through the Committee process.

By way of reference, the Passenger Facilitation Taskforce is an interdepartmental committee chaired by Customs and comprises senior representatives of the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service, the Departments of Immigration and Citizenship; Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government; Resources, Energy and Tourism; Prime Minister and Cabinet, Finance and Deregulation; and the Australian Federal Police. It reports to the Prime Minister through the Minister responsible for Customs, in consultation with Ministers responsible for the represented agencies.

Taking a 'whole of airport' approach the Taskforce meets regularly with, and undertakes its work program in conjunction and co-operation with, representatives of the eight Australian international airport operators, as well as airline and tourism representatives.