

SENATE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL LEGISLATION COMMITTEE
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

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Question No. 32

Senator Ludwig asked the following question at the hearing on 31 October 2005:

Please provide an executive summary of the submission to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (if this does not include a summary of the rights that are asserted over the continental seabed, please provide).

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

A copy of the executive summary of the Continental Shelf Submission of Australia is to be found at http://www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/aus04/Documents/aus_doc_es_web_delivery.pdf.

Under Article 77 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, a coastal State exercises sovereign rights over the continental shelf for the purpose of exploring it and exploiting its natural resources. Those natural resources consist of the mineral and other non-living resources of the seabed and subsoil, together with living organisms belonging to sedentary species.

The sovereign rights of Australia to its continental shelf are exclusive and no other State may exercise such rights on Australia's continental shelf without Australia's consent.