

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

Question No. 22

Senator FURNER asked the following question at the hearing on 16 October 2012:

Senator FURNER: I want to move to the international mail detections. I would like you to explain to the committee how many detections were made in 2007-08 as opposed to 2011-12.

Mr Pezzullo: Detections in terms of drugs?

Senator FURNER: Overall detections in mail.

Mr Pezzullo: I will ask Mr Wall to answer as best he can. We may need a moment while we go from, if you like, a commodity view of what we find to a sectoral view.

Mr Wall: These are the only stats that I have available at the moment. Since the introduction of our risk based approach to inspection of international mail, our detections of prohibited goods have actually increased by 83 per cent. But that is our sort of cross-stream improvement stat.

I might take you, if you like, to another layer of granularity to give you a sense of the environment and volumes. In 2011-12 we had over 64 million mail articles—parcels, registered mail and express mail service parcels—imported into Australia. This was in addition to over 118 million letters and almost 183 million postal articles. Australia Post is projecting volume growth in that area of 15 to 18 per cent over the next three years. One of the limitations we have in that space is that we do not currently have advanced electronic reporting for our risk assessment process. So everything has to be done in real time. The intervention strategy that I mentioned earlier that has led to the 83 per cent increase across the streams started back in July 2009. If you are looking for a more detailed break-up we can certainly take that on notice.

Senator FURNER: Yes, if you could take that on notice. So the 83 per cent increase is from 2009?

Mr Wall: Correct; since then.

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

Total number of detections in international mail

2007/08	2011/12
8345	58 253