

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2008
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No. OTS 01

Division/Agency: Office of Transport Security

Topic: Status Report on the MSIC Regime

Hansard Page/s: 109 (21/10/2008)

Senator McGaruan asked:

Senator McGAURAN—I would like a status report on the waterfront security system and the introduction of photo ID cards and vetting of those who work on the waterfront. I raised this in the last estimates and, just as I am getting now from the minister, a mock and a shrug of the shoulders, he did not even know it existed. It does exist. In the first estimates I started to doubt myself. I thought, ‘I do remember this going through parliament.’ And it did. We have a very extensive security-checking system on the waterfront. Can someone give me a status report with regard to that?

Mr Wilson—The issue that you raise is the responsibility of the Office of Transport Security, which were on earlier this morning. Those officers are no longer available, obviously. I am happy to take the issue on notice and provide an answer to the committee, but unfortunately nobody is here to answer that question.

Senator McGAURAN—My questions are: have there been any changes, how many rejections have there been and are there any recommendations for changes to the system? I would just like a health check on it, if you do not mind. It does not have to be elaborate. I do not appreciate the minister at the table mocking such a serious issue—

Senator Conroy—It is a very serious issue. It is just that it is patently obvious from this that the officers at the table do not cover the area you are referring to.

Answer:

The *Maritime Transport and Offshore Facilities Act 2003* (the Act) which provides the head of power for the Maritime Transport and Offshore Security Regulations 2003 (the Regulations) received royal assent on 12 December 2003.

The Regulations which underpin the Maritime Security Identification Card (MSIC) regime were made on 1 September 2005. The requirement to display a MSIC, while working unmonitored or unsupervised in a maritime security zone, commenced on 1 January 2007. AusCheck, a Division of the Attorney-General’s Department, commenced the background checking of all MSIC and Aviation Security Identification Card (ASIC) applicants on 3 September 2007. The following amendments to the MSIC related Regulations have been made since 30 September 2005:

- 13 July 2006, to allow for different sized fonts on the MSIC;
- 27 July 2006, to regulated the rollout of the MSIC regime during the implementation period;

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- 13 December 2006, to provide for temporary MSICs and other machinery of government changes; and
- 21 June 2007, consequential amendments were made to the regulations to enable AusCheck to undertake the background checking of MSIC and ASIC applicants.

Since the commencement of the MSIC regime on 30 September 2005, 112 MSIC applicants were refused an MSIC.

In July this year, the Government commenced a review of the MSIC scheme. The review is being undertaken by the Office of Transport Security.