

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Additional Estimates

13 – 14 February 2013

Question: AET 31

Topic: Australian Manufacturing Standards

Hansard Page: page 119, 13 February 2013

Senator MADIGAN asked:

Senator MADIGAN: Recommendation fifteen of the Prime Minister's manufacturing task force report is made partly on the basis that there should be an increased priority given to addressing misleading claims of conformity with Australian regulations and standards. With regard to imports, can you advise how many instances of false or misleading claims of adherence to Australian standards were referred to the ACCC?

Mr Sims: We might have to take that on notice, Senator, if we could.

Answer:

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) enforces compliance with the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010 (CCA)*. The CCA prohibits false or misleading statements and in particular prohibits false and misleading statements that promote the sale of goods on the basis of the goods being of a particular standard or having particular sponsorship approval, accessories, uses or benefits; as well as providing for the regulation of dangerous, unsafe consumer goods by making or declaring mandatory safety or information standards.

In the period 1 January 2012 to 31 January 2013, the ACCC received 45 contacts which raised questions or concerns about the standards applicable to certain imported products. Of these,

- 19 contacts were from potential importers inquiring about the application of a standard to items they were seeking to import
- 11 contacts related to imported olive oil and the claims associated with "extra virgin"
- 12 contacts involved concerns about whether certain products met appropriate Australian standards, and
- 3 contacts were from consumers who wanted to clarify standards on products they have imported.

None of these contacts alleged false or misleading statements associated with the goods.

The ACCC enforces compliance with over 60 mandatory standards and bans affecting the safety of consumer goods. Over 50% of these mandatory safety standards are based on Australian or international standards.