

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Budget Estimates

4 – 6 June 2013

Question: BET 28

Topic: Engineered Wood Products Association

Hansard Page: Tuesday 4 June 2013, Page 112

Senator MADIGAN asked:

Senator MADIGAN: I refer you to the January 2012 bulletin of the Engineered Wood Products Association of Australasia which refers to false and misleading advertising related to claims of adherence to Australian standards in regards to the stress grade of some structural flooring and roofing plywood imported from Chile. Apparently this was referred to the ACCC in the year before 1 January 2012. Are you aware of this claim?

Mr Gregson: I do not have the specific details, but we certainly have investigated received complaints in relation to building materials of the kind you are referring to in relation to both their structural capacity and whether they are compliant with standards. They are not matters that we have pursued. I do not have the details in front of me about exactly how that investigation progressed, but the time period was as you suggested.

Senator MADIGAN: So there were no investigations of these claims conducted?

Mr Gregson: My recollection is that an investigation team was charged with looking at the matters raised with us. They made inquiries and formed views, but I do not have the details in front of me about the outcomes of that matter.

Senator MADIGAN: So an investigation into these claims was completed?

Mr Gregson: That is my understanding, yes. We would be happy to provide more details on notice.

Senator MADIGAN: Can you tell me the outcome?

Mr Gregson: I do not believe it was a matter that we pursued through to a formal resolution. That is often the case either where the information provided does not support a contravention or where it is a matter that otherwise is not one that we would decide to pursue having regard to our enforcement and compliance policy.

Answer:

In late 2011 and early 2012, the ACCC considered allegations that a specified trader had sold plywood of a certain grade which allegedly did not meet the requirements of that grade.

Following approaches from the ACCC, the trader ceased the sale of the plywood in question and conducted an internal investigation. Following this, the trader provided the ACCC with independent certification of the products, which indicated that the products met the grading requirements. Despite this, the trader withdrew the products from sale and re-graded the plywood.

The ACCC was satisfied with this outcome in the circumstances and closed its investigation. The ACCC has not received any further complaints regarding this trader.