

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN CRIME COMMISSION

Question No. 12

Senator Parry asked the following question at the hearing on 25 May 2011:

Senator PARRY: Would it be fair to say that if there were plain packaged cigarettes it would make it easier to bring in cigarettes in an illicit manner because there is no brand identification?

Mr Lawler: I do not have sufficient expertise in that area to make a judgment.

Senator PARRY: Would it make detection harder, for example, or the evidentiary value of proving that a particular cigarette from a particular manufacturer was or was not present?

Mr Lawler: Again, it sounds logical, but one needs to think these things through before one makes a response to a question like that. The dynamics can be quite complex. We have not done specific work on an analysis or an assessment of plain paper packaging and its effect or how organised crime might respond to that, outside my comments about the profit motive, which is the principal driver.

Senator PARRY: Thank you. I ask that you take that question on notice and if you wish to add more to that answer after further consideration, please provide it back to the committee.

Mr Lawler: Certainly.

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

The Australian Crime Commission has not conducted specific inquiries into the potential implications of plain paper packaging for the illicit tobacco market and there is no international basis of comparison.