

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

Question No. 53

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

Given the Minister for Home Affairs' announcement on 12 February 2012 that the Government has asked the Australian Crime Commission to conduct a National Intelligence Assessment of the illegal firearm market and its links to gang activity.

1. Has the Government offered any additional resources to Customs to stop illegal weapons, specifically firearms from coming through air or sea cargo consignments?
2. Can you provide an update of the amount of sea and air cargo consignments that are coming into the country?
3. What percentage are being examined and physically inspected?

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

1. Customs and Border Protection was not offered, and nor did it seek, additional resources.

Customs and Border Protection risk assesses and screens international mail and parcels, cargo and passengers to prevent prohibited goods, including illegal firearms, from entering Australia. To support the identification and targeting of high risk consignments and criminal groups seeking to illegally import firearms, Customs and Border Protection established the Firearms Intelligence and Targeting Team [FITT] in April 2012.

The FITT comprises six experienced intelligence and targeting officers, one of whom is out-posted to the NSW Police Force, within its Firearms and Organised Crime Squad. This core team is supplemented by other relevant internal and external subject matter experts as required. This out-posting arrangement has enhanced the sharing of intelligence between the agencies and increased the level of cooperation in addressing this issue.

2. and 3.

		2011/12	2012/13 YTD (1 Jul – 31 Oct 2012)
Sea and Air Cargo Import Volumes	Air (consignments)	18.4 million	8,892,205
	Sea (manifest lines)	2.6 million	955,502
Percentage Inspected	Air (consignments)	8.0%	5.7%
	Sea (twenty foot equivalent units)	3.9%	3.7%
Percentage Examined	Air (consignments)	0.4%	0.3%
	Sea (twenty foot equivalent units)	0.6%	0.5%

Inspection definition – Inspection may include the use of non-intrusive examination such as x-ray technology (static or mobile), trace particle detection and detector dogs.

Examination definition - Physical examination of the cargo by a Customs and Border Protection officer.