



**Australian  
BORDER FORCE**

Mrs Fiona Phillips MP  
Chair  
Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Subcommittee  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Chair,

I write to you concerning the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Subcommittee public hearing for the Inquiry into Strengthening Australia's Trade and Investment Relations with Africa on 13 March 2026.

In my capacity as First Assistant Secretary Strategy and Border Modernisation Division of the Australian Border Force, I gave evidence to the Committee. Upon review of the Hansard record, I have become aware of the need to correct a response I made to a question from you.

The reference for correction is on page 1 in response to your question:

"Could you provide an overview of the Australian System of Tariff Preferences scheme and how it operates regarding trade and investment with African nations."

My response to this question was in part:

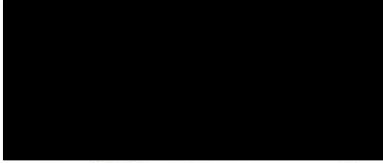
"Essentially, as you've described, the Australian System of Tariff Preferences—we might call it ASTP, if that's okay—provides a system of preferential tariffs for particular countries. Depending on whether countries are considered to be least developed or developed countries, there's a preferential system of tariff. You would have seen in our submission, for example, that 34 countries in Africa fall under the least developed countries preferential system, and 34 fall under developing countries, which then means that the tariffs that are applicable are lower than what would apply to other countries."

This response contained a factual inaccuracy, and consistent with page 3 of the Department of Home Affairs Submission, I am providing the following correction of evidence in response to this question:

34 countries in Africa fall under the least developed countries preferential system, and 36 fall under developing countries (which includes the 34 under least developed countries and Namibia and Botswana), which then means that the tariffs that are applicable are lower than what would apply to other countries.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide this clarification, which will ensure that correct information has been provided to the Committee.

Yours sincerely



**Tharani Vithanage**  
First Assistant Secretary Strategy and Border Modernisation  
Strategy and Capability Group

28 April 2026