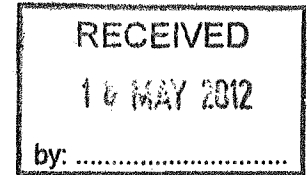


**HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES,
FISHERIES AND FORESTRY**

Inquiry into Wheat Export Marketing Amendment Bill 2012

Public Hearing Friday, 11 May 2012

Questions Taken on Notice – ACCC



1. HANSARD, PG 8

Mr TEHAN: With your experience with voluntary codes of conduct, can you point to some that have been effective and others that might not have been so?

Mr Salisbury: We could take that on notice. It is a bit difficult to talk about effectiveness, but we could perhaps give some indication of how widespread they are and the number of these things that are out there.

Mr Pearson: I ran the enforcement and compliance division for several years. I actually worked on a number of codes and assisted a number of areas with voluntary codes. Some were successful and some were not. For the ones that are not, quite often it depends somewhat on the lack of teeth and what sort of commitment the parties around them have. The vast majority of those were involved in consumer protection, I think, through our compliance area.

Ms Webb: We have quite a few guidelines on developing effective codes, and they are on our website. As David said, we could take on notice to provide you some of the detail about what we consider to be attributes of effective codes.

Mr TEHAN: That would be great; thank you.

ANSWER

The ACCC provides general guidance to industry associations (or groups of traders) seeking to develop voluntary industry codes of conduct intended to address competition or consumer-related issues within their industry.

The ACCC does not have a role in approving or endorsing voluntary codes and in many cases, may not be privy to the final version of codes that have been developed.

The ACCC's *Guidelines for developing effective voluntary industry codes of conduct* (available on the ACCC [website](#)) set out what the ACCC regards as characteristics of an effective voluntary code, including:

- a clear statement of objectives
- a code administration committee

- a complaints handling procedure (with an appeal mechanism)
- commercially significant sanctions for non-compliance.

Effective voluntary codes also typically have wide industry coverage, include provisions for data collection and require the preparation of an annual report.

The ACCC has provided general guidance on more than 50 voluntary codes to date.