

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 19 October 2011

Question: E11-282

OUTCOME 1: Population Health

Topic: TOBACCO

Written Question on Notice

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

- a) Is the Department of Health and Ageing aware that the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control suggests a neutral track and trace scheme as an appropriate measure which Governments can introduce to address counterfeit tobacco?
- b) What progress has been made in examining a neutral track and trace system for tobacco which is used as an anti-counterfeit measure against illicit tobacco?
- c) Has the Department of Health and Ageing examined the track and trace systems which are used in Canada, California and Massachusetts?
- d) Has the feasibility of such a system been investigated for Australia?
- e) What would be the estimated cost to introduce a track and trace system for tobacco be?

Answer:

- a) The provisions in Article 15 of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control regarding the marking of tobacco products are primarily intended to assist with determining the origin of product and whether it is legally for sale. They are not specifically directed at addressing counterfeit tobacco.
- b) The Australian Government does not endorse tobacco products. The Government will therefore not be providing supporting infrastructure for tracking and tracing of tobacco products in the form of Government endorsed or licensed machines for the production of codes, nor consumer phone lines or websites.

Advice from Customs and Border Protection is that the great majority of illicit trade in tobacco products in Australia is loose leaf or unbranded tobacco ('chop chop'), and a track and trace system would not assist in the detection of illicit tobacco at the border.

- c) No.
- d) See answer provided in b) above.
- e) The Department has not estimated the cost of introducing a track and trace system for tobacco products in Australia.