

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 19 October 2011

Question: E11-296

OUTCOME 14: Biosecurity and Emergency Response

Topic: NEMBUTAL

Written Question on Notice

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

- a) Can the Department advise of how often and in what volumes it has approved under the Customs(Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956 the importation of Nembutal in the last year?
- b) Can the Department advise on what grounds permission was given to authorise the importation?
- c) If no importation has been approved, are there any grounds on which the Department would authorise importation for use as a medicine?

Answer:

a) and b)

The Department has not approved under the *Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956* the importation of Nembutal in the last year (12 months).

There have been a small number of permits granted for importation of pentobarbital, almost exclusively for veterinary use.

- c) The legislative criteria for the granting of an import permit under Regulation 5 of the *Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956* require the Department to take into account whether
 - the importer is fit and proper to hold a import licence (e.g. nil criminal history, legitimate business),
 - the importer holds a state/territory licence to manufacture/sell/supply the drug to be imported,
 - the drug to be imported is for medical or scientific purposes,
 - arrangements have been made by the importer for safe transportation and custody of the drug to be imported.