

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee
Answers to questions on notice
Environment and Energy portfolio

Question No: 177
Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1
Program: Environment Standards Division (ESD)
Topic: Export of toxic waste to Finland – Conventions
Hansard Page: N/A
Question Date: 31 October 2016
Question Type: Written

Senator Rhiannon, Lee asked:

What responsibility does Australia have to responsibility manage its own waste considering we are a signatory to the Stockholm and Basel Conventions?

Answer:

Under the Stockholm Convention, parties must ensure that wastes of persistent organic pollutants, such as hexachlorobenzene, are destroyed or irreversibly transformed, or otherwise disposed of in an environmentally sound manner and not transported across international boundaries without taking into account international controls.

The Basel Convention does not ban all transboundary movements of hazardous wastes, but requires that any movement 'is reduced to the minimum consistent with the environmentally sound and efficient management of such wastes, and is conducted in a manner which will protect human health and the environment'. The Convention specifically allows movement of wastes if the 'State of export does not have the technical capacity and the necessary facilities to dispose of the wastes in question in an environmentally sound and efficient manner'.