

**Senate Standing Committee on Economics**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Treasury Portfolio**

Budget Estimates

4 – 6 June 2013

**Question: BET 92**

**Topic:           Safeguard Inquiry**

**Hansard Page:       Thursday 6 June 2013, Page 78-79**

**Senator McKENZIE asked:**

**Senator McKENZIE:** I do not think anyone is suggesting dumbing ours down but I think you would agree that New Zealand, for instance, who is still significantly reliant on agricultural exports, like we are, finds it a lot easier to initiate these sorts of actions. Could you provide the committee with an estimate of how much it would cost to conduct a safeguard inquiry?

**Mr Harris:** We could provide that, but the simple answer is that it would not be an impediment to us doing the job we believe we are resourced to do. We would do the job, but we can provide you with an estimate, yes.

**Senator McKENZIE:** What about the cost to industry making an application?

**Mr Harris:** I am going to ask Ms Gropp again to try and help on that.

**Ms Gropp:** I will have to take that on notice. They have to provide information. It would depend on how much information et cetera.

**Senator McKENZIE:** I heard similar questions in an earlier committee today that there has been quite a lot of conversation throughout government between departments and ministers' offices et cetera—we have only done two—about who does what, where, when and how. Have you been part of that conversation?

**Mr Harris:** I have not. I do not know whether officers at the table have—

**Mr Quinlivan:** I think that sounds like a discussion between the commissioning agencies, if I can describe them that way, about how to best carry out Australia's obligations here. We would be the recipient of that advice at the end when a decision was made to commission the work, if indeed that happens.

**Senator McKENZIE:** Are you able to inform the committee of how many times Australia has applied measures under the WTO anti-dumping agreement and taken action against imports from countries allegedly exporting at dumped prices?

**Mr Harris:** I do not think, unless we have done a recent report on this, that we have the information. I think probably a little time ago we did something.

**Ms Gropp:** A few years ago we did a report into the anti-dumping act. I cannot remember the exact year; I could come back to you on that.

**Senator McKENZIE:** I am interested in your role as a commentator around a free market system.

**Answer:**

For the Productivity Commission itself, the cost of an inquiry into a safeguards matter - involving hearings, analysis, data access and an Associate Commissioner - is likely to be in the order of \$200,000 (excluding staffing). For industry participants, the costs will vary widely. The Productivity

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Commission takes submissions in a simple electronic form, so cost need not be a barrier to participation.

The Australian Customs and Border Protection Service publishes detailed information on past anti-dumping cases. The archive of past cases is available online at: <http://www.customs.gov.au/anti-dumping/cases/Archivedcases.asp>