

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Innovation and Science Portfolio
2015-16 Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing
22 October 2015

DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND SCIENCE

TOPIC: Boron Content of Steel

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Xenophon

QUESTION No.: SI-65

Is Standards Australia aware that the failure in their process, which allowed the Australian Steel Association to override technical advice from the Steel Industry and veto the inclusion of a clause in the Steel and Welding standards to limit boron, has created a potential threat to public safety?

ANSWER

The below response has been prepared by the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science in consultation with Standards Australia.

Standards Australia is a non-government, membership based, not-for-profit organisation with over 70 members including government, industry associations, professional bodies and consumer organisations. The work of Standards Australia is aimed at enhancing the nation's economic efficiency, international competitiveness and community safety.

The Department of Industry, Innovation and Science manages the Commonwealth's relationship with Standards Australia through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which recognises Standards Australia's role as Australia's representative in international fora (such as the International Organization for Standardization [ISO]). However, the MoU does not provide the Australian Government with authority to intervene directly in Standards Australia's standards setting or other activities.

Australian standards are developed on a consensus basis by volunteer committee members who represent a balance of consumer, business, government and academic interests.

With regard to claims that actions by Standards Australia have created a potential threat to public safety, all standards are developed by the relevant Standards Australia Technical Committee. The Technical Committee is comprised of experts nominated by peak associations, government agencies, academic bodies and unions (amongst others). Technical Committee members are not employed by Standards Australia.

Standards Australia's process ensures that every Australian Standard is published on the basis of broad stakeholder agreement on the technical merit of its content.