

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-66

The Welding Technology Institute of Australia states that:

By virtue of Standards Australia granting the ASA significant stakeholder “major interest” status, the ASA have been given a veto on the progress of important technical Standards. This cannot be justified either by their contribution to the steel value chain, where they simply buy and sell steel products, or the merit of their technical argument which lacks rigour from an engineering and material science perspective.

What is Standards Australia’s response to this statement?

ANSWER

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

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

Standards that govern the inclusion of boron in structural steel are managed by Technical Committee BD-023 Structural Steel and it is the activities of BD-023 that have attracted claims of “veto rights” being applied. BD-023 includes a wide range of stakeholders including the Australian Steel Association (ASA). The ASA represents steel importers, traders and fabricators of steel products which accounts for between 20-50 per cent of all steel used in Australia.

As such, and for the purposes of BD-023 in its current form, the ASA is considered to be a significant stakeholder. Standards Australia processes do not require committee unanimity to publish standards, but if any significant stakeholder maintains a negative vote then it is unable to move to publication of a draft standard.