

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES – 26 – 27 MAY 2014

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(BE14/207) PROGRAMME – Australian Customs and Border Protection Service

Senator Carr (Written) asked:

What is the current Government policy on the importation of asbestos into Australia?

- a. Has this changed since 7 September 2013?
- b. If yes, please detail these changes.
- c. How does the Australian legislative framework rank when compared with international standards?
- d. Is the Department aware of any plans to alter the existing legislative or policy framework regarding the ban?

Answer:

Workplace health and safety regulations categorise asbestos as a class 1A carcinogen, subject to stringent workplace controls. The *Customs Act 1901* and the *Customs (Prohibited Import) Regulations 1956* prohibit the importation of asbestos or goods containing asbestos, without prior permission. Permission is generally only granted in very limited circumstances.

- a. No.
- b. Not applicable.
- c. The Department of Employment is the responsible Government agency for information pertaining to the comparison of Australia's legislative framework.
- d. The Australian Customs and Border Protection Service (ACBPS) has been approached by the Department of Employment and the Department of Defence to request very minor amendments to the import and export regulations to align them with recent name changes to referenced legislation. ACBPS is not aware of any proposals for actual policy change.