

## QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

**BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING : 25 May 2015**

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

**(BE15/021) - Sea Freight - North QLD & PnG - Programme 3.2: Trade Facilitation and Industry Engagement**

Senator McLucas, Jan (L&CA 56) asked:

Senator McLUCAS: I want to go to questions of preclearance for Customs for air and sea freight moving from North Queensland to Papua New Guinea. Can you update the committee on negotiations between Australia and Papua New Guinea around the proposal for preclearance for freight at the Cairns airport and the Townsville seaport?

Senator McLUCAS: Could you give me an understanding of the time frame around when these considerations have been had? Because I am aware that under the former government there had been quite a range of conversations. What has happened subsequently?

Mr Quaedvlieg: I am not sure historically. I can take that question on notice whether there has been either formal requests or discussions in relation to this. Certainly since I have been in the role since October, there were some initial conversations in relation to some preclearance around late last year, 2014. Then it was resurrected again sometime around March-April. But they are the only two approaches I am aware of.

*Answer:*

In late 2013 the Australia Papua New Guinea Business Council proposed the preclearance of export cargo in Cairns by Papua New Guinea (PNG) Customs officials from Cairns port and airport to facilitate import clearance on arrival to PNG.

Former Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, the Hon Scott Morrison MP asked the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service (ACBPS) to engage with relevant PNG authorities to clarify the operational and funding aspects of how such a proposal might work before proceeding further. In those engagements, PNG Customs indicated that it was not supportive of the proposal.

As such, no further action has been taken on this matter.