

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S PORTFOLIO

Group: 3

Program: 1.6

Question No. SBE14/032

Senator Xenophon asked the following question at the hearing on 20 November 2014:

Mr Anderson: One other thing on the subject of ice: I mentioned the Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs, which is pulling together the national response from the health and law enforcement sectors. Mr Dawson has talked about the ACCs work and the response of the different parts of law enforcement. Other work that is going on is looking at working with industry on controls that industry can apply to supply of precursors and things like that. There is actually a lot of work going on in this space which hopefully will come to fruition early in 2015.

Senator XENOPHON: Would you mind giving a broad outline, not in the sense that it would affect anything operational, perhaps on notice on this sort of work that is being done? I think a number of my colleagues share similar concerns about the impact of crystal methamphetamine. That would be very useful.

Mr Anderson: Certainly.

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

The methamphetamine that is available in Australia is both imported and manufactured domestically from precursor chemicals. The precursor chemicals for methamphetamine are also both imported and obtained domestically, often having been diverted from legitimate sources. The Attorney-General's Department is currently involved in work to enhance both the domestic and border controls over these chemicals.

The Attorney-General's Department chairs the Precursor Advisory Group (PAG), which includes representatives from Commonwealth, State and Territory law enforcement and health agencies. The PAG is working to develop recommendations for improving controls on precursor chemicals by increasing consistency across Australia and reducing opportunities for the diversion of chemicals into the manufacture of illicit drugs.

The PAG is currently consulting with the Precursor Industry Reference Group (PIRG) on a series of draft recommendations. The PIRG includes representatives from industry, such as the Pharmacy Guild of Australia and the Plastics and Chemicals Industry Association. After this, the PAG will seek ministerial consideration of the draft recommendations through the Law Crime and Community Safety Council in the second half of 2015.