

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING : 17 October 2016

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(SE16/018) - Asbestos - Inspection of containers - Programme 1.2: Border Management

Senator Xenophon, Nick (L&CA 74) asked:

Senator XENOPHON: Because of time constraints I just want to get to this: of those countries which have, let's call it a lax standard—they do not have zero tolerance in respect of asbestos—what percentage of containers from those countries would actually be inspected overall?

Mr Outram: I cannot answer that. I have to take that question on notice.

Senator XENOPHON: Can you take that on notice, please, because that is quite significant. Given that hundreds of thousands or millions of shipments come in, what percentage are actually assessed in respect of this? I just want to ask a question on notice to the minister that relates to Senate question No. 10 that I put on notice on 30 August. Minister—I do not mind if you put this on notice—there was a Building Ministers' forum on 19 February 2016 for a data-sharing arrangement for imported building products. Could you advise us as to what the progress of that data-sharing arrangement is and what the progress has been in respect of that? When can we expect there to be appropriate data-sharing and what would the implications of that be?

Senator Cash: Thank you, Senator Xenophon. I will take it on notice and get back to you.

Answer:

Question 1:

The Australian Border Force (ABF) conducts risk assessments on one hundred per cent of cargo imported into Australia.

In relation to asbestos, the ABF has identified over 50 countries that import, export or mine asbestos or where there is evidence that asbestos is used in manufactured goods.

A proportion of goods imported from these countries include goods which do not present a risk of containing asbestos (such as live animals, food products, flowers and wooden articles).

All other goods imported from these countries are risk assessed through the use of profiles targeting the presence of asbestos. Of those, 44 per cent of sea cargo consignments are subject to further assessment at the border, which may include further document verification, inspection or testing.

Question 2:

Please refer to the response for Senate Question on Notice No. 10 that was tabled on 11 October 2016

(http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Chamber_documents/Senate_chamber_documents/qon/question?number=10&parliament=45).