

**SENATE EMPLOYMENT, WORKPLACE RELATIONS AND EDUCATION
LEGISLATION COMMITTEE**

**2003-2004 SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING
6 NOVEMBER 2003**

COMCARE

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Question Number: W173-04

Question:

Senator Carr asked in *writing*:

When did Comcare first receive a complaint about the incident that led to the contamination?

Answer:

Refer also to W172-04.

The investigation which resulted in the finding of asbestos fibres was initiated by Comcare on 3 July 2003 as a result of concerns expressed by NGA staff to the investigator who was investigating entry of fibreglass fibres into the gallery. The concerns related to the removal and clean up of asbestos from the fitter's workshop at the NGA in July 2000.

Comcare was first made aware in 2001 of the incident in 2000. At that time, Comcare made enquiries which established that in July 2000, a contractor had cut a panel containing asbestos at the NGA. In response, the NGA had engaged an asbestos removalist to clean the affected area, followed by testing. The testing revealed that no asbestos fibres were detected. Based on the information available at the time of its inquiries (i.e. a year after the incident), Comcare was satisfied that the NGA had met its duties under the *Occupational Health and Safety (Commonwealth Employment) Act 1991* (the Act) and a formal investigation was not conducted.