

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

Output 1.4

Question No. 62

Senator Abetz asked the following question at the hearing on 18 February 2008:

- a) Why did Mr Debus, Minister for Home Affairs, involve himself in the public discussion about what was going to be done with the evidence gathered during the whale watch exercise?
- b) Is Mr Debus examining what legal avenues to pursue with this evidence that we do not know whether he asked for or not?
- c) Who would be the minister responsible for determining what legal avenues will be pursued with this evidence? Would it be the Attorney-General?

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

- a) The Minister for Home Affairs is responsible for the Australian Customs Service whose contracted vessel, the Oceanic Viking, collected evidence of Japanese whaling activities in the Southern Ocean.
- b) The Government is examining the use to which the evidence gathered by the Oceanic Viking will be put.
- c) The Government is considering possible legal action. The Attorney-General will have the responsibility for the conduct of any legal action.