



Fabricated structural steel safeguards

Interim report webinar transcript – 10 September 2026

Note: This transcript has been edited for clarity and brevity. Certain words have been modified or omitted, while maintaining the integrity of the original message.

Commissioner Barry Sterland

Welcome to the webinar from the Productivity Commission on our Fabricated Structural Steel Safeguards interim report.

My colleague, Catherine de Fontenay and I will share the presentation and we'll run through the results.

But I just want to start by acknowledging the traditional owners of the Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. And we pay our respects to their Cultures, Country and Elders, past and present.

These are the topics we'll cover today. They roughly flow through the same structure as the report.

So, what is this inquiry covering?

It's an inquiry to test whether safeguard action is warranted against imports of fabricated steel products in Australia.

The inquiry is to be undertaken in accordance with the WTO safeguard investigation procedures. And just a little of what those safeguards tests require:

- they require us to demonstrate that imports must have increased in a recent sudden, sharp and significant way
- the industry, domestic industry, must suffer or face an imminent threat of serious injury and there must be, if those things are true, there must be a genuine and substantial causal relationship to link the increase in imports to that serious injury.

Let me give a bit of explanation of the process of where we are up to today.

We've had pretty extensive engagement, including with many of the people registered for this webinar, received 62 submissions. You've got some of the other details on this slide.

The engagement mattered a lot to us. It shaped our scope, how we identified the firms involved and tested the evidence. And then we considered that participant experience alongside administrative data for the industry as a whole, which Catherine will take you through.

We'll be inviting further submissions to this interim report, and I'll go through those relevant dates towards the end of the presentation, after Catherine's spoken.

The scope of the safeguard investigation, just go to the next slide. It's informed by the World Trade Organisation requirements and industry intelligence.

So, the time frame, the investigation period, we've chosen to be the financial years 20 to 21, to 24 to 25, and we used earlier and later data where we had it as context to understand the trends in that period.

The in-scope products, they're all outlined in the in the terms of reference and the notification to the World Trade Organisation.

There were 12 codes involved and the people on this call would be aware of the sort of content of those codes.

We assess them as one product grouping and I'll come back to that in a moment. That's permitted under the WTO rules, subject to certain elements and for our domestic industry, the producers and the quotation marks there are around what the WTO requirements would look like and that's that they're producers of like or directly competitive products.

Now we chose a core group that was based around the ASI membership plus other firms that came to our attention and Catherine will speak a bit further to that.

So why did we aggregate the 12 codes?

Well, on talking to the industry, including some of the testimony at our hearings, it seemed to provide a more reliable import picture.

There's a very large residual 'other' code as part of those twelve 10-digit codes we talked about and that seems to be a bit of a catch all when people don't know exactly how to classify their specific import shipments.

We also found that there was a pretty common production base that the product, the products that were imported, the domestic counterparts to those use overlapping facilities, inputs, labour and processes. And that was said quite explicitly by many of the submissions.

And so we then apply the test to the group as a whole because the industry works as a group and the imports we thought were reasonably aggregated and that established the sort of parameters for our inquiry.

I'm going to turn over to my colleague, Catherine de Fontenay now to take you through the imports and injury data.

Commissioner Catherine de Fontenay

Thanks very much. Next slide. Thanks.

So, in terms of imports, we first looked at absolute imports. So, the volume of imports in tonnes.

The WTO test is that you have a recent, sudden, sharp and significant increase in imports. In common language, a surge, that we're currently in a brand new surge in imports.

So, if you look at this import data, it does show that imports have been increasing over time.

But what we see there is that in the investigation period imports have actually been increasing a little more slowly than in the pre-investigation and there was a surge in imports in 2021-2022, but that did not continue. Instead imports went back to their trend before that period of time.

So, our judgement is that if we look at this series, imports are increasing in a pretty similar way in the investigation and the pre-investigation period, so that doesn't meet this test for a sudden, sharp, significant and recent increase in imports.

Turning now to relative imports.

So, this is tonnes of imported steel divided by tonnes of domestic, and you can look in our report in appendix B to see how we estimated domestic production.

And I'll get to this idea of what a conservative and expanded population is in a couple of slides.

But what you can see in both of those lines is that again, you can see a spike in 2021–2022, but that spike did not continue after that.

In fact, for the later part of the investigation period, relative imports are pretty flat.

So in our view that does not meet this recent, sudden, sharp and significant test that the WTO imposes. So again, relative imports are increasing a little bit, but not in a significant way.

So how did we come up with our import data?

So, some of you may be wondering why these series look a little bit different to the series that that you estimated yourselves.

So, a number of people drew on data from the consultancy service at the Australian Bureau of Statistics where they extract merchandise import records and provide a report as a consultancy.

It's worth noting that in that custom extract there can be confidential records that are removed, so firms can request to have their data removed from that data.

And we found when we took a close look at the weight information and the quantity information at the level of an individual record from merchandise import records, we found that some of the reported quantities looked erroneous.

So, what we did instead was look at that transaction level merchandise import record, look closely at weight and quantity and value to come up with a reliable import series.

And we have lots of details on the data in our report.

Just to note, New Zealand and Singapore were excluded from the data that we just showed because of our obligations under free trade agreements with them. But the volume of imports from those countries is very, very small.

Next slide, please.

So now we turn to the question of whether the domestic industry has experienced injury.

Next slide. Thanks.

So we're very grateful to the firms that reached out to us. Some firms provided submissions, some firms took the time to speak to us about their personal experience in the last few years, and that was really helpful information.

And we heard from 34 firms who made public submissions and nearly all of them reported that they were experiencing growth in imports and reduced market share in their market.

They reported, many of them reported, that they were receiving lower prices and that their margins were being squeezed and they tended to relate that to import competition. So they experienced competition from lower priced imports in tenders and as a result were under pressure. This meant that they were reporting weaker sales, lower profits, lower production, lower capacity utilisation and lower employment.

Now it wasn't uniform. Different firms experienced different, slightly different, things in these categories, partly because of the nature of the fabricated structural steel market where orders are relatively large and last for a period of time.

There was a consistent picture from these submissions that these firms were experiencing injury.

The challenge from our point of view is that we have heard from 34 firms on the record, but the industry is well over 300 firms. And so the experience of that 10% is not necessarily reflective of the experience of the industry as a whole.

We needed to find a way to get the experience of the industry as a whole.

There's a risk if we just look at what happens to those 34 firms, there's a risk that we're going to get a bias towards finding excessive injury because the firms that are really hurting are more likely to come and reach out to us in this investigation.

There's also a risk that we might miss firms that have gone out of business, so they are less likely to reach out to us because they have now exited the industry.

So we wanted to avoid what we call selection bias of hearing from the firms that are experiencing difficulties or that may or that are still in operation.

So, what we did is we turned to data that would give us a comprehensive picture of the industry as a whole. So what we did was we drew on what is essentially tax data in order to get a picture of the industry as a whole.

So we gathered data from BIT, BAS and pay as you go forms and the data in those forms is held by the Australian Bureau of Statistics after it's submitted to the ATO.

And we were able to access that data in an anonymised form. So we don't know the particulars of any individual firm. We don't know which firm it is that we are looking at, but we're able to look at the firms as a whole. And that meant that we could avoid some of these selection difficulties and get a sense of what was happening to the industry as a whole.

And what we see in that data is that while some firms in the data are clearly under pressure, when we look at the aggregate, when we look at firms as a whole, we're not seeing what we would think of as serious injury.

Next slide.

So how did we choose these firms to get a picture of the industry as a whole?

Well, we mostly focused on what we call our conservative population. Our conservative population is the 336 members of ASI. So ASI provided a list of their fabricated structural steel members. Plus about 40 firms that either reached out to us during our inquiry or that were identified to us as having gone out of business during this period.

So that gave us a sample of 376 firms where we knew for sure they were part of the fabricated structural steel industry.

We also looked at what we call our expanded population. So, this was that conservative group plus businesses that were identified as being purchasers of steel inputs of the kind that are used by fabricators. So we got an estimate of who is buying steel in ways that are comparable to fabricators.

So this is our best guess as to the total size of the fabricated structural steel industry, but we wanted to be cautious and mostly focus on that conservative population which are ASI members and these firms that reached out to us directly and firms that went out of business.

So what we are looking at to make this analysis is this micro data of these tax forms as analysed in the Australian Bureau of Statistics DataLab environment.

We've provided all the information we can about the methodology that we use to analyse that data and we will also be having that methodology reviewed by an expert from another part of government in order to assess that that methodology was done properly.

Next slide. Thanks.

So what does that data show?

So what it shows is that over the investigation period, sales and profits have both gone up significantly. So you can see that there was a dip in 2021–2022 and that both sales and profits were lower in that particular year, but that that did not continue.

So you see over the rest of the period that sales and profits are increasing.

We looked at a couple of measures. We looked at sales and we looked at turnover just to make sure we were getting an accurate picture.

And in profit, we looked at profit and also EBITDA, because a little bit of the way depreciation was treated over this period changed and EBITDA might be a more accurate measure of what's going on with firms.

Next slide. Thanks.

Sorry, actually go back one second.

So in terms of injury, it is difficult to argue that there is a large injury to the firms that are making up the industry if sales and profits are both going up.

Next slide. Thanks.

Next, we looked at employment, productivity and capacity utilisation.

Let me just talk about employment first of all.

So employment also goes up over this period.

But you do see that it starts to decline a little bit later in the period.

So from 2023 to 2024 you see a decline in the headcount and in the full-time equivalents that these firms in total are hiring.

So overall in the period we do see a full-time equivalents and headcount going up, but there is a slight decline at the end of the period.

In terms of productivity, so we estimated that as total factor productivity. So that's outputs over the value of inputs. Total factor productivity did go up as well over this period. And capacity utilisation went up, but we do see a decline from 2022–2023 to 2023–2024.

I should say that productivity and capacity utilisation, we only have that data for up to 2023–2024 for the moment. And so we're using this more as guiding information rather than as our main measures to focus on.

Thanks. Next slide.

We also took a look at output and import market share in dollar value.

So in terms of output, again you can see that our estimate shows that output is going up over this period. So again, unlikely to indicate serious injury if output is going up over this. Again, you can see that there was a dip in 2021–2022, but that did not continue.

In terms of import market share, while their tonnage has been going up, their share of the market in dollar values has stayed really pretty stable over this period.

It's about a quarter to 15% depending on which measure of the population you want to use.

But it has stayed quite stable over the period that we're looking at and that's because the prices of those of those imports has stayed relatively steady. But the price that domestic producers have been able to get for their steel has been going up.

Next slide. Thanks.

So we did want to dive into this question of why the firms that were speaking to us, were reporting injury, but we were not seeing injury in the population as a whole.

We are seeing that those aggregate indicators are looking quite healthy, but we take seriously the fact that the firms that came to talk to us are experiencing difficult market conditions.

And so we have been looking at that and we'll be exploring that further up to the final report.

What we've done so far is look at our data by firm size to see whether, for instance, smaller firms are having a much harder time or is there any sort of pattern by size. But what we see is that we don't see any consistent pattern by size. We do see that the smallest firms are growing sharply, but that's more about the construction of the data. But we don't see a clear pattern that says that a particular size firm is having a more difficult time.

We also took a look at what we heard from participants in our inquiry and the general view was that firms have made some changes to their mix of work in response to rising imports.

So some of you have mentioned that the portal frame market in particular was exposed to a lot of import competition.

We've heard from a number of firms that they have moved towards targeting more complex projects, that they have expanded the services that they offer to offer more engineering or some installation and that they're aiming at different tiers in the market.

So there is some change to how firms are approaching the market, which is reflective of pressure in specific segments. But what we see in this aggregate data is that they have been successful in making that change to other tiers in the market.

So there is definitely pressure on specific firms, but we're still seeing that activity as a whole is improving.

I'll now turn to Barry to talk about the threat of injury.

Commissioner Barry Sterland

Thanks, Catherine.

And just from this slide, before going into the numbers, I just want to like the, the, the concept of threat has a sort of very specific WTO type meaning and the factors are listed there on the left-hand side: must be clearly imminent, on the verge of occurring, high degree of likelihood, etc.

The evidentiary standards that that they used for injury also apply to threat. And so you've got to base it on quantifiable factors based on facts and not sort of conjecture or remote possibility. And the recent evidence is particularly relevant, but those short-term measures have to be movements, have to be interpreted in the context of longer term-trends.

So what we started with when we thought about this issue of threat was what are the most recent data points. These are all from the slides Catherine just presented.

And you'll see that most of those measures, as she mentioned, are going up right through the investigation. All of them go up during the investigation.

Though we see the employment indicators come off from the peak in the latter part of that investigation, but still well above the early part of the period.

So from the data we're saying, well, it's the pattern of that data isn't suggestive of how the WTO would think through that issue of imminent threat.

The only data we have beyond 24/25 is for imports, the next slide.

And when we look at that chart, it's got the sort of characteristic quarterly volatility of the import series. But again, it doesn't look like something unusual is happening in the period beyond the end of 24/25, which is where we have the most, the widest set of data indicators, either directly or estimated. And we can come back to some of that estimation later.

So just on the findings, you know, they've been mainly anticipated, but I'll just go through them formally because it matters for an inquiry like this.

So these are mostly interim, but one final finding.

So I'll go through the interim ones. The increase in the imports we don't think meets the WTO standards required for all the reasons Catherine's spoken to.

And then the injury and threat of serious injury, we find the same, that it doesn't meet the standard of evidence required to demonstrate these things.

So that leaves us with an interim finding on the overall question. And a definitive safeguard measure is... they're temporary but they're not immediate. So the interim, the things in the terms of reference we have to look for... I'll start with the provisional one, which is on the right. The provisional safeguard is a requirement that we could determine now at this point in the inquiry that there was such a clear evidence of threat that you could, you know, go out very soon and put a measure on. So that's a final finding that those conditions for the provisional measures are not met. And if you think of that they were an even higher threshold for moving urgently to measures.

The finding on the definitive safeguard measures, these are the ones that could go for 2, 3 or 4 years based on this inquiry. That's an interim finding and we're finding that those conditions are not met.

We'll return to that question in our final report in November to make that a final finding, to come to a final finding on that issue and all the other issues.

But the question of whether there's a sort of argument for provisional measures to be immediately introduced is finalised at this stage of our inquiry.

If you move on to the next report, because this is an interim report, in one sense because we're not finding that those WTO evidence thresholds are met, there's sort of... there's no issue to look at on public interest and detailed measure design.

If we had a found the reverse then that have that would have to be more detailed look, but we felt because it's an interim report that it was important for us to outline some of the features and many of you and other participants have written in on aspects of that part of our terms of reference.

And so, we covered the public interest and measure design considerations in the report. How would you assess whether a measure's in the public interest, how would you design a measure, would it be a tariff, a tariff quota or a quota.

And we just come back to an issue that was raised enough with us during the report on quality.

So, I'll just quickly run through those in two slides.

So, if the Safeguard measure was justified, we'd need to do more analysis of the public interest and measure design, but we outlined some of the things we'd look at.

So, on the public interest test, would the measure deliver net benefits to Australia?

What we did with this framework is we went according to the framework that's outlined in the draft bill in front of the House about that includes the transfer of functions for Safeguard investigations. And we looked at how each of these elements that are in that bill that outline how public interest should be looked at. And we thought they were reasonably intuitive.

So we followed that in our chapter and we first look at what are the benefits to the protected industry. There's an emphasis in the whole Safeguard Agreement on adjustment to ensure sustainability. And so you'd be looking at whether the measures assist industry in achieving that long term viability, are there capabilities that you could lose that would be costly to reestablished etc?

Then there's a thinking about how more broadly significant is that industry? Is it critical infrastructure? Does it raise resilience or net zero issues for Australia's future that that that need to be looked at? And we were suggesting that they should be looked at rigorously under established frameworks that are established outside in a sense of the safeguard framework and Treasury published a national interest framework for thinking about those some time ago, and we've published on that ourselves.

And then finally you'd want to look at the economy wide impacts. How would this affect downstream industries and consumers? Typically border measures would increase the prices and costs to downstream industries and consumers. You'd look upstream at the impacts on those industries. You would want to look at any impact on Australia's broader trade. So that might also affect other export industries if other countries reacted in some way to a measure.

And then you'd want to look at how does a safeguard measure compared to other ways of dealing with any identified problems. And I'll come back to some of those issues in a moment.

And then when you go to the measure design. All border measures have those costs to other industries. They all protect a domestic industry. There'd be elements of how you thought about that.

And we, when we thought about this and Australia's trade posture, we just thought that quotas are probably the least preferred of the measures. They're less transparent, they're more complex and they produce incentives that are undesirable. So there'd be several measures you could choose from, but we felt quotas were the least preferred of those.

Let me just look at the particular issue of safety and consumer protection, because that was raised often in our inquiry. And we just make the point that a safeguard measure is never, you know, designed to address issues like product quality. It's there to assist a domestic industry that's suffering, you know, serious injury because of imports.

The sort of concerns raised in the inquiry were about documentation, traceability, the conformity of import products. Are they doing what they were told?

There are other producers that sort of argued almost that the reason imports have continued to increase is that some overseas producers are much more adept at meeting Australian requirements.

So there was some sort of different sort of trends or themes on the safety and quality side. We didn't investigate these in detail, but you know these would be the sort of areas you would look at when you're thinking about the response to those issues if they were borne out with closer investigation.

The safeguard measure would raise the price of both compliant and non-compliant imports alike. So, if someone's importing high-quality fabricated steel, the price of that would go up, the non-compliant one would go up as well. Similarly it wouldn't affect their relative impact if there were domestic variation as well. So, there's no requirement to test product quality and verify conformity.

And so, when we look at this as a policy issue, this would be an example where if there were issues that were confirmed, you would address them directly rather than through a safeguard measure. You'd enforce objective standards that weren't discriminatory between imported and domestic product, but they were based on public safety, for example, and conformity assessment and that the quality requirements in procurement were being met. So, it's sort of an example of how you would address that issue directly rather than via a border measure.

So just move on to the final slide about next steps.

We've published the interim report. As I mentioned, we've made a final finding on provisional measures, but it's an interim finding on definitive measures.

The submissions are due by the 30th of September.

Our final report is due by the 23rd of November and that's where we provide our final findings on definitive safeguard measures to government and recommendations to government.

We will receive feedback from stakeholders through submissions and further engagement. We're open to talking directly.

We will also be undertaking ongoing data analysis. We've done a lot as you can imagine already, but we'll be doing more.

And as Catherine mentioned, we'll be drawing on some independent peer review. Because of the protected nature of that data environment that we've worked in, we'll find someone that's also got clearance to use that data to, you know, check through our code and, and make sure that data analysis is correct.

So that's, that's our next steps.

We're now going to open for questions. They've been started to be published in the side.

I wonder Catherine, if you want to take Georgina Watkins' question from 26 minutes ago the one down the bottom of the screen there.

Q&A segment

Commissioner Catherine de Fontenay

Thanks Georgina.

So recent should be as recent as possible. We were mainly guided by what was the period for which data is available. There will be a little bit more data available before our final report and so we'll be drawing on that as well.

So, for instance, Barry showed numbers for the next three quarters outside of our investigation period. Those are available on the ABS website for the moment. Those are tentative and they will be confirmed and finalised. [Note: the data is not publicly available on the ABS website.]

So, what we want to do is we want to take those on board, but we want to focus on the period for which the data is reliable.

But we are definitely looking at the most recent data that we can access.

Commissioner Barry Sterland

And I think implicit in that question, Catherine, you might want to speak to it is a little, you know, some of the industry values we had to for the last year, I think we sort of estimated from relationships, you know, turnover to sales and that sort of thing. So we sort of used established methods would be the best way of explaining. And it's all pretty well outlined in in the technical appendix from memory.

Commissioner Catherine de Fontenay

It's outlined in the report, but the short version is BAS data is available more quickly than some of the other data sources.

Sorry, go ahead Barry.

Commissioner Barry Sterland

And Ankit asks the next question, which is, you know, erroneous import quantity data. I suspect your best place to answer this to you, Catherine.

Commissioner Catherine de Fontenay

Yeah, so three things are reported and occasionally there are missing values and one is value and then quantity and then weight. And weight is the weight with packaging, quantity is the weight without packaging.

So that's one of the reasons that people have sometimes come up with slightly different import numbers, as some of them are using the weight data and some of them are using quantity data.

Now when we look at those 3 numbers for each transaction, each merchandise import, incoming quantity, there were a number of cases where that ratio became a bit unrealistic. So, for instance, you know, for instance, the price of the steel was pennies. And so for those cases where the numbers were unrealistic, what we did was we drew on the ratio between quantity and weight that was the average for imports in general. Essentially, it's trying to pick up where what has been entered in that transaction level data is unrealistic. But the full details are in our appendix.

Commissioner Barry Sterland

I've got a second question from Georgina, which is again on the data side.

How did we assess profitability and industry injury of domestic fabrication activities within the industry without polluting the data with positive financial outcomes associated with firms involved in imported fabrication?

Now from memory, I can at least mention that there we had a very small percentage of firms that import directly themselves. But you can maybe go to some of the other data issues, Catherine.

Commissioner Catherine de Fontenay

Yes, what we did was we [looked at] the 2 to 3% of fabricators who are importing fabricated structural steel and we found that the same patterns held when we exclude those firms that are importing. So it does happen. There are fabricators who are importing fabricated steel, but it's a relatively small share. [Note: we did not exclude these firms from the analysis we used to make our findings].

Commissioner Barry Sterland

Let me, then, thanks, Georgina for that.

Honi, hi, the safety issues I think hopefully was answered in the most recent slides there only how we thought about that if there are issues there to focus on those and we frankly didn't investigate them close enough to come up with policy recommendations. But we just wanted to give you a sense of how we would sort of think through that issue.

The injury point. Well, you know, there's a very high, there's a quote that's in the report on how serious injuries addressed and it says something like it's, it's a very high threshold, much higher than anti-dumping. So, it's not an assessment about what profits or sales could be in the absence of imports. It's a much more sense of the industry's really falling sharply and the indicators are reflecting high, high injury to the firm. And so that's fairly clear in the WTO requirements that we were looking at.

On Anna Jordan, moving to Anna Jordan questions, Anna Jordan's question. Yep, findings 3.1 and 4.1, they are interim findings. Everything except 5.2 is an interim finding, all those 3. And so we will be, you know, going back to the, you know, we will be looking at that further in response to analysis and

feedback. The reason we titled those 2 to bring emphasis was because of that difference that there are some issues that are covered off finally in the final report.

Alfredo Paneherrera has got a detailed question about the Anti-Dumping Commission.

Have you got, have you had a chance to look at this Catherine?

Commissioner Catherine de Fontenay

That's fine. Yeah, so Alfredo, the criteria for a safeguard action are quite different to the criteria for an anti-dumping action.

So in an anti-dumping case, it's important to find that products are being dumped in the Australian market at unfairly low prices, below domestic cost or below cost when accurately assessed.

There's no similar requirement in safeguard. In a safeguard action what needs to be found is that there has been this very sudden unprecedented surge of imports that the domestic industry has not had time to respond to. So it's more like an emergency temporary injunction.

So, we do in the report look at what people have told us about global overcapacity in steel and that may be contributing to rising imports into Australia. But that is not actually part of the test for a safeguard action. The test is whether imports have surged, whether there has been a sudden sharp, recent and significant increase in imports.

Commissioner Barry Sterland

On Matt Condon's question, I'll read it out, people can see it there, 'Given WTO jurisprudence does not allow injury from a surge in subject goods to be legally offset or cancelled out by the performance of non-subject goods, how did we satisfy ourselves that the assessment of industry performance excluded non-subject goods or services and only related to the subject goods?'

There's some discussion of this in the report. Our evidence, the evidence we received from the industry was that those included in the conservative population largely produced fabricated structural steel that is like or directly competitive with the products under consideration. We've got an estimate in there from memory, around 80% or so, and the submissions from fabricators indicated that that was the majority of their income coming from the sale of in scope products. So we didn't hear really many bits of feedback on that that would suggest that was changing rapidly over time in such a way that would produce any distinction of results.

And of course, I mean the import data itself was showing a steady change, not a very large like, not a surge. And so in that sense that matched up with that, that sort of sense of market growing, imports growing and there was no sort of in a sense contradiction to, or tension to explain there.

And I think we got... Alfredo asked another question on the increase in imports by 28% over the period while domestic production increased by only 14%.

Let me just, maybe ...

Commissioner Catherine de Fontenay

Sure, I'll, I'll take that one.

So, Alfredo's question is if imports in tonnes are growing faster than domestic production... Could you put up the next slide, the relative imports?

So this is our best estimate of relative imports, that is to say domestic imports in tonnes divide, sorry, imports in tonnes divided by domestic production in tonnes.

And what you can see is that it is increasing over the period but it is increasing slightly and there is a spike in 2021-22, but it does not continue. So we are concluding that imports have increased and that relative imports have increased. But as you can see from the graph that increase is not recent, sudden, sharp and significant. So at the end of the period you are not seeing, in common language, a surge in imports. So that's the basis for our conclusion.

Commissioner Barry Sterland

And Catherine, I think it also be fair to say you when you go through the injury factors and we're looking at market share in a more conventional value-based way that was turned into a very flat outcome. So obviously that suggests the price for domestic is going up more rapidly. And so that would be a way of explaining why the other injury factors aren't going in a negative direction. So that's relevant to that answer, I think.

Commissioner Catherine de Fontenay

Now, we have a question from Anna Jordan about whether we were using the narrower or expanded number of firms to reach our conclusions.

So what you can see from the evidence that I stepped through is that the outcomes are very similar whether you use the conservative population or the expanded population.

And so we reached our conclusions based on the conservative population, but you would get the same conclusions if you were to use that expanded population.

Commissioner Barry Sterland

Yeah, the 2 lines pretty closely moved together when we break them out.

So I think that's the end of our questions that we have. I'll pause if anyone's adding one.

But as you know, we can start, we'll wrap up and give you a bit of time back.

As we mentioned, really welcome further submissions and published information that's non-confidential is really important to be able to incorporate and fully incorporate in our analysis. So that would be welcome.

We're also open for further engagement as I've indicated and yeah, that's the process from here.

We'll be working away to meet our November deadline and that's where we'll be going.

So Catherine, any final words from you? I suppose it's really to appreciate everyone's involvement today. We've appreciated that right through the process, but you know we'll continue to take that into account.

Just before signing off, there has been another question come in from Russell Burns: 'State significant projects I've been involved in over the last five years have directed subcontractors to purchase overseas fabricated steel products to reduce costs.' How do we address this?

I think that's a little bit out of scope of our current inquiry, Russell.

Not saying they're not important issues, but we've got a pretty narrow focus and we're wanting to stick as much to that focus as possible. There may be other policy issues to address in the fabricated steel area, but wouldn't want to go off the cuff on that.

So yeah, I think just, you know, pursue any questions like that with the areas of policy inside state governments and federal governments that have relevant jurisdiction over that.

OK. Well, with that, I think we might close up now.

Thanks everyone for your involvement and welcome further engagement.

Talk to you later.

Commissioner Catherine de Fontenay

Thank you.

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