



Treaties Committee supports Australia’s withdrawal of exemption for use of the pesticide mirex

The Federal Parliament’s Treaties Committee has tabled a report giving the go ahead to the withdrawal of Australia’s exemption for the use of the termite pesticide mirex under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.

Mirex, available as the product Mirant, was formerly used in northern Australia to control giant termites. Australia was one of two countries that registered an exemption for the use of mirex upon ratifying the Stockholm Convention in 2004. Mirex is one of 12 persistent organic pollutants listed for action under the Convention.

According to Treaties Report 90, withdrawal of this exemption for mirex will demonstrate Australia’s commitment to protecting human health and the environment through the elimination of toxic and persistent chemicals.

The Committee also recommends that Australia take binding treaty action in relation to three intellectual property agreements. The Patent Law Treaty will harmonise and simplify patent administration procedures on a world wide basis and establish legal certainty and safeguards for patent applicants.

Similarly, the Singapore Treaty on the Law of Trademarks will establish consistent procedures for registering trademarks, including non traditional marks such as holograms, three-dimensional marks, colour, and taste and feel marks. The Committee also supports proposed constitutional reform to the World Intellectual Property Organization.

Report 90 also contains the Committee’s discussion on an air services agreement with Tonga. Almost 27,000 people travelled between Australia and Tonga in the year ending in June 2007. This agreement establishes a binding legal framework to support direct air services between the two countries, providing reciprocal arrangements for safety, customs, regulation and commercial operation.

Report 90 is available on the Committee’s website: www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/reports.htm or by contacting the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4002.

MEDIA CONTACTS

Media contact:	Kelvin Thomson MP (Mr Anthony Cianflone)	(03) 9350 5777
	Senator the Hon Sandy Macdonald (Ms Rachel Sherman)	(02) 6766 6998
Background:	James Rees (Committee Secretary)	(02) 6277 4642