



## **Inquiry into treaty on filing international lawsuits**

Federal Parliament's Treaties Committee today commenced an inquiry into a treaty aimed at simplifying the process by which Australians can sue, and be sued by, persons in another country regarding civil and commercial matters.

Currently, in order to initiate a private lawsuit against a person or company in another country (or to exchange lawsuit-related documents) Australians are required to hire private legal agents from that country, or are required to go through complex legal and diplomatic channels. The same applies for lawsuits coming in from abroad. These processes can be lengthy and cumbersome, and sometimes hinder the progress of legal proceedings.

The *Hague Convention on Service Abroad of Judicial and Extrajudicial Documents in Civil or Commercial Matters*, tabled in Parliament yesterday by Foreign Minister Steven Smith, endeavours to set down a simplified process where lawsuit-related documents can be lodged directly with, and received directly by, a designated central authority in each country. The Convention also establishes a range of other secondary channels through which litigants can file private lawsuits.

The Treaties Committee is seeking submissions on the implications for Australia of acceding to the Convention. Submissions are requested by Friday 24 July 2009.

For more information visit [www.aph.gov.au/jsct](http://www.aph.gov.au/jsct) or email [jsct@aph.gov.au](mailto:jsct@aph.gov.au) or phone (02) 6277 4002.

### **MEDIA CONTACTS**

**For Mr Kelvin Thomson MP (Chair) contact Mr Anthony Cianflone (03) 9350 5777**  
**Background: Committee Secretary (02) 6277 4002**