



Closer economic ties with New Zealand, and a new commitment for transferral of prisoners with China

At its next public hearing in Canberra on Monday 28 February 2011, the Joint Committee on Treaties will consider treaty amendments aimed at facilitating closer trans-Tasman economic ties, another that will establish the terms for the transferral of prisoners between PRC and Australia, and amendments that will enhance the development agenda of the World Bank Group.

Under the framework of the Australia New Zealand Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement (ANZCERTA), the new **Agreement with New Zealand on Trans-Tasman Court Proceedings and Regulatory Enforcement** will streamline the process for resolving legal disputes, with benefits for both business and individuals.

New amendments to **ANZCERTA Rules of Origin (Article 3)** and the **Product Specific Rules schedule (Annex G)** aim to provide consistent trade classification for product lines, making trade free of duty across the Tasman.

However, at recent hearings the Committee was told that the amendments will provide a 'structural' advantage to New Zealand's suit-making sector, which may lead to the demise of Australia's two remaining suit manufacturers.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) will respond to this evidence, and also discuss the Rules of Origin and free trade proposals under the new Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus.

The Committee will also take evidence from the Attorney-General's Department and DFAT on the **Treaty between Australia and the People's Republic of China concerning Transfer of Sentenced Persons**, and from the Treasury on the development agenda under the **Amendments to the Convention Establishing the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency** and to the **International Finance Corporation Articles of Agreement**.

The Committee Chairman Kelvin Thomson MP commented:

'The Committee welcomes the progress made towards an arrangement for transfer of Australian and Chinese nationals under sentence between our respective nations within a comprehensively regulated system. On Monday, the Committee will review the benefits and risks of the Treaty as drafted, with a focus on human rights and rehabilitation.'

Copies of the National Interest Analysis and treaty texts are available under Treaties for the 43rd Parliament at: <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/reports.htm>
Alternatively, interested parties may email jsct@aph.gov.au or phone (02) 6277 4002.

MEDIA CONTACTS

For Mr Kelvin Thomson MP (Chair) contact: Mr Anthony Cianflone on (03) 9350 5777

For background information contact: Committee Secretary on (02) 6277 4002

PUBLIC HEARING PROGRAM

Treaties referred on 16 November 2010 and tabled on 9 and 10 February 2011

Monday, 28 February 2011
10.15am - 12.15pm
Committee Room 2R1

- 10.15am** **Exchange of Letters Constituting an Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of New Zealand to amend Article 3 of the Australia New Zealand Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement (ANZCERTA)**
and
Exchange of Letters Constituting an Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of New Zealand to amend Annex G of the Australia New Zealand Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement (ANZCERTA)
- 10.45am** **Amendments to the Convention Establishing the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency to Modernise the Mandate of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency**
Amendment to the International Finance Corporation Articles of Agreement
- 11.15am** **Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of New Zealand on Trans-Tasman Court Proceedings and Regulatory Enforcement**
- 11.45am** **Treaty between Australia and the People's Republic of China concerning Transfer of Sentenced Persons**
- 12.15pm** **Close**