

11 2 1994

**MEMBERSHIP OF THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE**

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37th Parliament

Senator S Loosley (Chairman)  
Hon M J R MacKellar MP (Deputy Chairman to February 1994)  
Mr R G Halverson OBE MP (Deputy Chairman from February 1994)

Senator M Beahan (to February 1994)  
Senator V W Bourne  
Senator D G C Brownhill  
Senator C Chamarette (to September 1993)  
Senator H G P Chapman  
Senator B K Childs  
Senator N A Crichton-Browne  
Senator K J Denman (from February 1994)  
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Senator The Hon M Reynolds  
Senator B C Teague (from August 1993)  
Mr R A Atkinson (from February 1994)  
Mr A R Bevis MP (to May 1994)  
Hon N Blewett MP (to February 1994)  
Mr G Campbell MP

Hon M J Duffy MP (from February 1994)  
Mr L D T Ferguson MP  
Mr E J Fitzgibbon MP  
Mr G D Gibson MP  
Mr E L Grace MP  
Mr D P M Hawker MP  
Mr N J Hicks MP  
Mr C Hollis MP  
Mr D F Jull MP (from June 1994)  
Hon R J Kelly MP (to January 1995)  
Hon J Kerin MP (to February 1994)  
Mr J V Langmore MP  
Hon L S Lieberman MP  
Hon J C Moore MP (to June 1994)  
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Mr W L Taylor MP

A/g Secretary: Mr P Stephens (to May 1994)  
Secretary: Mrs J Towner (from May 1994)



THE PARLIAMENT OF THE  
COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Joint Standing Committee  
on  
Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

A REPORT ON A VISIT TO THAILAND AND LAOS

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SENATE

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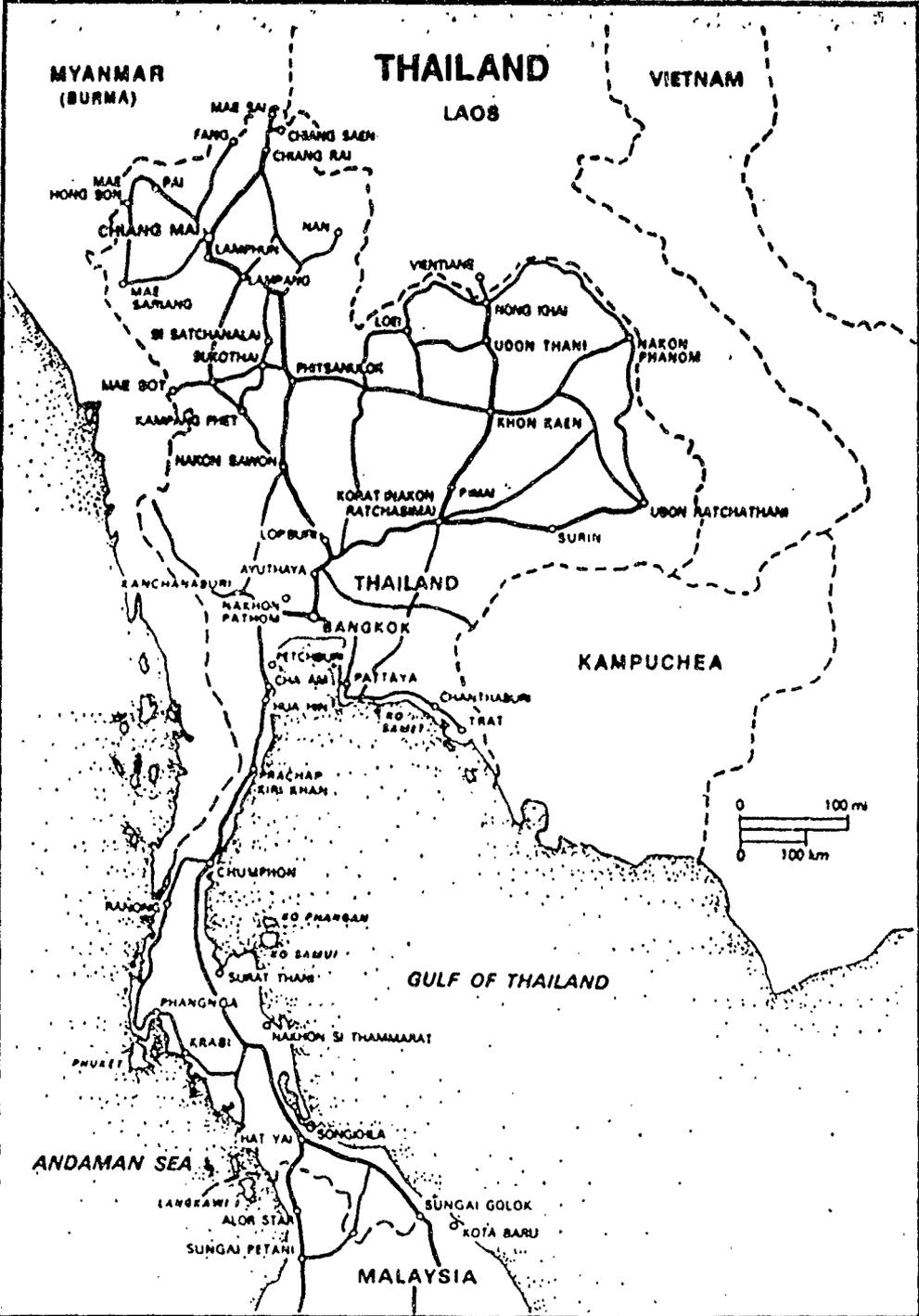
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## **Background**

1. On 10 December 1993, the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade received the following reference from the Minister for Foreign Affairs:

To investigate and report on Australia's relations with Thailand, with particular reference to:

- a. economic relations, including bilateral trade and investment;
- b. cultural, political and regional issues, including Thailand's relationships within ASEAN and with its other neighbours;
- c. the defence relationship between Australia and Thailand;
- d. the impact on Thailand of such matters as the 'Golden Triangle', drugs, and piracy in its waters;
- e. the impact on Thailand of refugees from Burma and Cambodia; and
- f. the effectiveness of Australia's development assistance to Thailand.

2. The inquiry is being undertaken for the Committee by its Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee.

3. On 9 May 1993, the Sub-Committee agreed that the Prime Minister should be approached for funding for seven members and a staff member to visit Thailand as an additional Parliamentary Delegation. Following receipt of that approval, on 25 September 1993 the Sub-Committee agreed that, if possible, the delegation should also visit Vientiane in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) for as much of a day as the overall program allowed.

4. The period for the visits, 18 November to 1 December 1994, was fixed after assessments of members' availability, and discussions with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the posts involved. The itinerary for both visits is at Appendix A.

## **Aims and Scope of this Report**

5. The visits which are the subject of this report were seen as an integral part of the Sub-Committee's inquiry into relations with Thailand. They sought to ensure that the delegation saw something of Thailand and Laos and their people, and had the opportunity to explore some aspects of the bilateral relationships.

6. Because the report on Australia's relations with Thailand will not be tabled for some time, the delegation believed it should report to the Parliament its impressions of these visits as early as possible. It also believed that the relationship with Laos is important and needs urgent attention. This report therefore includes an amount of material on the short visit to Laos greater than the time spent there might seem to

justify. The relationship with Laos will not be covered in the report on relations with Thailand.

### Membership

7. The delegation was:

Mr L D T Ferguson, MP (Leader)  
Mr R G Halverson, OBE, MP (Deputy)  
Mr E J Fitzgibbon, MP  
Mr C Hollis, MP  
Mr D F Jull, MP  
Rt Hon I McC Sinclair, MP

Secretary: Mr P M Regan.

8. Illness prevented Senator V W Bourne who was also a member of the delegation from taking her place, but in the short time remaining before departure it was not possible to arrange a replacement.

### Discussions at the Embassy

9. On Saturday 19 November 1994, the delegation met with the Ambassador HE Mr C O F Hogue who was just about to return to Australia for consultations. These discussions began with an overview of the Thai-Australian relationship and then dealt with the Thai economy and the opportunities which its growth presents to Australia. A picture was presented of a dynamic economy where there were gaps in the educational system and in other parts of the infrastructure to which attention is being paid. Examples were given of areas of the relationship with Australia which were adequate but could be developed. These included trade, investment, tourism and education. The role of the monarchy in Thailand, the army's role in politics and the integration of Chinese into Thai society were also discussed.

10. Each of the Embassy's section heads then outlined specific aspects of the relationship, drawing attention to its many strengths and indicating the areas where further progress could be made:

- . Education
- . Australian International Development Assistance Bureau (AIDAB)
- . Immigration
- . Austrade
- . Defence Industry
- . Australian Federal Police (AFP)

- . Political and economic section
- . Public Affairs
- . Defence
- . Defence Science Adviser.

11. After lunch, the delegation inspected the Attakarn Prasit Apartment Project near the Embassy which will provide a range of accommodation for Australian-based staff. This project was approved by the Parliament, following an inquiry by the Public Works Committee. It was fortunate that Mr Hollis, the Chair of that Committee, and Mr Halverson, a member, were on the delegation. At the site, worthwhile discussions were held on the labour market and building practices in Thailand.

### Visit to Hellfire Pass and Kanchanaburi War Cemetery

12. Accompanied by the Assistant Defence Attache, Major Allan Lowe, the delegation then drove to the Felix River Kwai Resort, via Ban Pong Station. From June 1942, this was the terminus for the trains carrying Australian and other Allied Prisoners of War (POW), and conscripted Asian labourers, to work for the then Imperial Japanese Army on the Burma-Thailand Railway during the Second World War. Some of the buildings beside the platform are from that time.

13. The road to Hellfire Pass crosses the route, almost 200 kilometres long, which the POWs had to walk to reach the southern end of the railway line.

14. At the plaque in Hellfire Pass which commemorates all those who lost their lives while working on the railway, Mr Ferguson and Mr Halverson laid a wreath on behalf of the Government and People of Australia. An enthusiastic sub-committee of the Australia-Thai Chamber of Commerce has constructed steps down to the memorials and maintains them. Each year, an Anzac Day service is held at these memorials and in 1994 the Australian Prime Minister attended. The ashes of the late Sir Edward ('Weary') Dunlop were scattered in the Pass.

15. Kanchanaburi War Cemetery contains the remains of 1362 Australian Navy, Army and Air Force POWs who died building the southern part of the line. At the Cross of Sacrifice, Mr Ferguson and Mr Halverson laid another wreath. This cemetery and Hellfire Pass are enduring reminders of the strong links between the Australian and Thai peoples. A significant number of Thai tourists visit both places further strengthening this unique relationship.

16. In the evening the delegation attended an informal dinner hosted by **Professor Dr Prasop Ratanakorn**, Secretary-General of the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD). Mr Hollis is Treasurer of this organisation and he and Professor Prasop attended the Conference on World Population in Cairo earlier

in 1994. Professor Prasop is a good friend of Australia and it was a compliment to the delegation that he hosted two functions in different capacities.

#### Discussion with Ministers and Officials

17. On the first morning of the delegation's formal program on Monday 21 November 1994, **Dr Charenpol Suwannachot**, Chief of Inspectors' General of the Thai Ministry of Education, referred to Thailand's plans to extend compulsory formal education from six to nine years, its wish to encourage greater participation in these additional years and to decentralise the education system to the provincial level, the attention being devoted to technical education and Thailand's interest in becoming the educational hub of the region.

18. The Foreign Minister, **HE Dr Thaksin Shinawatra**,<sup>1</sup> entered the Cabinet from business without becoming a member of Parliament and saw the delegation on his third day in office. He gave a comprehensive overview of Thailand's relations with Australia which was particularly welcome as, prior to the visit, there had been some tensions between the two countries over Thailand's relationship with the Khmer Rouge. The Minister reiterated the Thai Government position that, although there was cooperation with Cambodian authorities, there was no contact with the Khmer Rouge and even greater efforts needed to be made against it. He stressed, as did many other officials, problems caused by a lengthy border and traditional cross-border travel.

19. The delegation discussed a range of issues with Dr Thaksin, including the then recent decision of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) group to reduce tariffs in developing countries by 2020, the current situation in Burma, Cambodian refugees in Thailand, the development of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), including its free trade area, and the challenges which he as a new minister saw facing the government.

20. **HE General Vijit Sookmark**, the Minister of Defence, stressed the importance to Thailand of the Defence Cooperation Program (DCP) with Australia. He believed that the provision of training under the DCP was more beneficial to the Thai Armed Forces (TAF) than the supply of equipment. In particular, the role of the Australian Special Air Service in training the Thai counter-terrorist force was noted. There appeared to be scope for further growth in the Thai-Australian defence relationship. Although there were no formal defence treaties between Thailand and Australia, it was expected that joint exercises would continue to contribute to a regional capacity against any threats, to the advantage of both nations.

21. The TAF was studying a number of issues, including the potential for Thailand's defence industry to work with Australian Defence Industries (ADI), the use of Airborne

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1 Dr Thaksin has since resigned from the Cabinet.

Early Warning and Control/command and control aircraft and links between the TAF and the armed forces of the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC). The TAF was also being reorganised and restructured to meet regional contingencies within budgetary constraints.

22. The Minister and the delegation also discussed the situation in the region including ASEAN, Burma and the PRC, noting that some rivalries and competition could be seen within it, together with some problems from outside the region. With reference to Cambodia, it was agreed that the supply of any military assistance by Australia was entirely a matter for those two governments.

23. During his meeting with the delegation, the Minister of Commerce **HE Mr Uthai Pimchaichon**, noted Australia's interest in increasing its exports to Thailand and the opportunity the Thai intention to reduce tariffs on raw materials would create for Australia. While some matters remained to be resolved, settlement of obstacles in trade between the two countries were generally well coordinated, particularly when issues of the dumping of commodities arose.

24. At APEC, the two nations will continue to work together on the opening up of world trade. Under the provisions of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), such areas as tourism, education, engineering services, computer engineering and software could be opened up between Thailand and Australia. The recent passage of the Intellectual Property Law through the Thai Parliament would particularly benefit Australian trade.

25. The Minister for University Affairs, **HE Dr Krasae Chanawongse**, outlined recent changes in the university sector, mentioning linkages with and financial support from industry. He also referred to problems, short and longer term, in the provision of the number of additional teachers required for the extension of formal schooling from six to nine years.

26. An issue of significance was the supply of university education to the countryside, where there is currently a shortage of places compared with Bangkok and larger centres. The Minister's own provincial background strengthened his determination to act on this matter. An issue related to the provision of places for tertiary education, and the responsibility of another ministry, was the conversion of 36 teachers' colleges to universities. While tuition fees are up to ten times lower at public than at private universities, encouragement of students to attend universities, by such means as low rate loans, was at an early stage of development.

27. During a briefing by an official of the **Board of Investment (BOI)**, the following major points were covered:

- the various strong features of the Thai economy, including domination of business by the private sector, widespread deregulation and tariff reductions, and growth in the services sector, especially in tourism;

- . the concentration of industry around Bangkok, in spite of incentives to relocate to the country;
- . the resulting infrastructure bottleneck, leading to the need for a mass transit passenger system and a new international airport for Bangkok;
- . Thailand's strategic location as a spring board to Indo-China and Southern China, and its determination to act as a regional economic powerhouse; and
- . opportunities for Australian participation in a range of activities, particularly in environmental management.

28. The Minister of Industry, **HE Major General Sanan Kachornprasart**, outlined the range of government measures which had led to the growth of the Thai economy in the 1980s. He also referred to Thailand as the gateway to Indo-China, Southern China, and Burma and suggested that investors would come to Thailand because of its long term stability.

29. Environmental problems, the use of child labour in small illegal factories, compliance with existing legislation and the decentralisation of industry away from Bangkok were all matters which required attention. The Minister highlighted the 50 per cent increase in exports to Australia in the last two years which had not changed the balance of trade between the two countries, indicating the many opportunities which existed for Australian companies in Thailand.

30. In the evening, the delegation hosted a reception for **Thai and Australian Non-Government Organisations** (NGOs), academics and social commentators. This gave members the opportunity to discuss a wide range of issues including the situation in Burma, HIV/AIDS and child prostitution in Thailand. One of the guests was the past President of the International College of Surgeons, Professor Thira Limsila. He is also the Chairman of the Dunlop-Boon Pong Exchange Fellowship which is another symbol of the close relationship between the two nations. The guest list for this function is at Appendix B.

#### **Breakfast Meeting with the Australian-Thai Chamber of Commerce**

31. At a breakfast meeting with members of the **Australian-Thai Chamber of Commerce** (ATCC) on Tuesday 22 November 1994, the delegation was briefed on the operations of some Australian companies in Thailand. In his opening address, the President, **Mr Gary White**, said the ATCC has over 200 members and, established since 1973, is the oldest non-Thai chamber of commerce in Bangkok. The range of its activities are regulated under legislation. With a committee of ten members and a number of sub-committees, the chamber is non-profit and totally self-funding.

32. Mr White highlighted the differences often present between politicians and business interests and drew a distinction between the differing priorities of politics and business.

33. He also drew attention to the excellent trade situation between Thailand and Australia, but the poor investment record from each country to the other. While there was plenty of competition and many opportunities for Australian companies in Thailand, he believed that each country had taken the other for granted. Thus, education on both sides was required. While expatriates were needed in Thailand, the impact of the Alien Business Law and the Alien Occupation Law inhibited their use.

34. **Mr Chris Leon**, of Thai Industrial Gases, drew attention to the high turnover in professional and senior management, about 28 per cent per year for Thai staff and about 25 per cent for expatriates. In his company, it was about 15 per cent. He also mentioned the skill differential in the countryside compared to Bangkok. He suggested that the Thai education system, with its emphasis on rote learning at the primary level, was having an impact on the preparation of many students for further study.

35. **Mr Alex Tan**, of Telstra Corporation, outlined the Samart-Australian Telecom joint venture and the regulatory framework in Thailand. He reinforced Mr Leon's points about senior personnel turnover and difficulties with training, referring also to the prevalence of aggressive poaching of staff which had led to a turnover of ten per cent in a month.

36. **Mr Terry Adams**, of Linfox Logistics Thailand, gave an overview of the transport industry in Thailand, stating that neither the infrastructure nor the regulatory framework was keeping up with technological developments in that industry, hence in part Bangkok's chaotic traffic. In particular, he referred to the widespread use of the ten wheel, short wheel base truck which is the basic unit of haulage of goods in Thailand and the resulting inefficiencies. He also mentioned the opportunities which existed for professionals to run bus networks in Thailand.

37. **Mr Will Hamilton**, of Thai Leighton Ltd, gave details of work the company had undertaken since entering the Thai market as a joint venture partner. He pointed out that large profits had been made in the 1980s in the construction industry in Thailand in spite of restrictions on the supply of steel and cement. He gave some indications of the difficulties of operating in the Thai market and said that while the Friendship Bridge over the Mekong between Thailand and Laos had been an outstanding successful project, there were difficulties for Australian companies in getting follow-on orders.

38. Mr White, in his capacity as Chief Representative of the Westpac Banking Corporation in Thailand, described the structure of the banking industry in Thailand, saying that the Bangkok International Banking Facilities (BIBF) only allow foreign banks to have representative offices. With restrictions in place on banking operations, overseas banks were not full competitors with the Thai domestic banks.

39. Problems of staff retention were again raised during a short discussion period. Foreign companies, it was suggested, generally treat their employees well and a code of conduct was a possibility.

40. The delegation found this breakfast particularly useful in obtaining detailed and incisive knowledge of practical barriers facing Australians and their companies in Thailand.

#### Further Calls and Discussions

41. At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Deputy Permanent Secretary **Dr Saroj Chavanaviraj**, briefed the delegation on the following major issues:

- . the effect of the end of the Cold War on the region, including Thailand's relations with the PRC;
- . the Mekong Corporation project;
- . recent developments within APEC and ASEAN;
- . Thailand's relations with Burma and Cambodia; and
- . the position of refugees, dissidents and minority groups within Thailand and the region.

42. **Mr Mechai Viravaidya**, Chair of the Population and Community Development Association (PDA), was educated at Geelong Grammar and at the University of Melbourne and has retained a significant Australian focus. He has been a member of four Thai governments and remains involved in a wide variety of activities. In his presentation, he outlined the Association's work, emphasising its role in the villages of Thailand, in work on HIV/AIDS, and the involvement of foreign businesses in providing work for villagers in the north of Thailand. The Thai Business Initiative in Rural Development (or TBIRD) was created in 1985. In the context of a code of ethics for foreign firms, he believed there was a need for such organisations to demonstrate civic responsibilities.

43. He also suggested that Australians should seek to sell an education system, but should not forget the Australian life style and referred to those Thais who have lived and studied in Australia as 'mini-ambassadors'. Mr Mechai drew attention to the Loy Krathong Festival, scheduled for Melbourne in November 1995 and outlined difficulties in staging it. The organiser has forwarded a submission to the inquiry into relations with Thailand and gave evidence at a public hearing in Melbourne in August 1994. The Committee has referred Mr Mechai's concerns to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Victorian Premier.

44. Finally, he discussed the proposed opening of the international school in Thailand in 1996. This is a joint endeavour between the Doi Tung Development Project, a Royal Initiative Project of Her Royal Highness the Princess Mother, and Geelong Grammar

School in Chiang Rai Province. The intention is that there be exchanges of students between the Thai school and Geelong Grammar. There will be an emphasis on environmental protection and on interaction with local Hill tribes. Work has already begun on the site.

45. Over lunch, **M R Pridiyathorn Devakula**, President of the Export-Import Bank of Thailand, explained the role of the bank, and then gave a wide-ranging analysis of the Thai economy and Thailand's trade, and commercial position within its region, as well as a range of likely developments within that region. He analysed Thailand's role with its neighbours in banking and commerce, with an overview of financial and commercial relationships within ASEAN and his perceptions of likely developments within the member countries' economies. This briefing was particularly useful for its breadth and because of the depth of knowledge displayed by M R Pridiyathorn.

46. **Dr Narongchai Akrasanee**, President of the Australia-Thailand Business Council, Thai Section (ATBC), answered questions on a variety of issues. These included:

- . the effectiveness of Australian development assistance;
- . investment in Thailand and Australia by the other country;
- . Thailand's financial structure, including the taxation system;
- . the disparity between Bangkok and rural Thailand, and the range and effectiveness of measures taken to reduce it; and
- . government and democracy in Thailand.

47. Dr Narongchai also commented that Australia had had an extraordinarily close relationship with Thailand after the Second World War and wondered whether it was as close today.

48. **General Charan Kullavanijaya**, Secretary-General of the National Security Council (NSC), outlined its structure and role, stressing the cooperative relationship it has with relevant Australian bodies. He then discussed various regional issues which impinge on the work of the NSC, including drugs, international terrorism, refugees and illegal immigrants. In the latter context, he mentioned the systematic exportation of people from the southern provinces of China to the region, which was resulting in increased arrests and deportations, and subsequent returns by many to Thailand.

49. On Wednesday 23 November 1994, **Mr Ruprecht von Arnim**, Representative to Thailand of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), noted that Thailand was now seen as an industrial country and therefore attractive for a range of would-be immigrants. UNHCR was looking at all aspects of cross-border movement, and there was a need to distinguish between the people who would like to stay and those who are not internationally protected and cannot return to their country of origin. He summarised UNHCR's involvement in the region, with particular emphasis on the situation in Burma and Cambodia.

50. Thailand's policy was to provide temporary protection to those who need it. The government has a committee to work with NGOs, embassies and UNHCR on the range of issues. Mr von Arnim referred to the Thai reluctance to sign UN Protocols and Conventions due to an historical mistrust of foreign intervention in domestic affairs. UNHCR was also aware of the range of policies Thailand had in place.

#### Meetings at the Parliament of Thailand

51. **HE Mr Marut Bunnag**, President of the National Assembly and Speaker of the House of Representatives, answered a number of detailed questions on Thai Parliamentary procedure. He also outlined contacts between the libraries of the two Parliaments since a visit by the Australian-Thai Parliamentary Friendship Group in 1988.

52. **HE Mr Meechai Ruchupan**, President of the Senate, also discussed Parliamentary procedure, the committee system, the role of the media in Thailand and the intention to build a new Parliament. He also gave details of the staffing arrangements for members, electoral expenditure and the equal position of women in the Thai electoral system.

53. At a meeting with representatives of **Parliamentary Committees**, the structure of the committee system within the Parliament was explained. There was then considerable discussion of the situation in Cambodia and the delegation made it clear it understood the position of the Thai Government about the Khmer Rouge.

54. Senator Pichai Vasinanong was particularly critical of Australian comments on the situation in Cambodia. As a result, the Australian position was explained and it was pleasing for the delegation to receive assurances that there were no further difficulties in the relationship. It was also agreed that it had been useful for the issue to be raised and dealt with so frankly and fully. It is fair to say that this meeting particularly highlighted Thai sensitivity about the statements concerning contacts with the Khmer Rouge. While the matter was raised on a number of occasions, it is the delegation's view that it is in the past and will not have any lasting impact on the overall relationship.

55. **Professor Dr Prasop Ratanakorn**, in his capacity as Chair of the Thai-Australian Parliamentary Friendship Group, hosted a lunch for the delegation, to meet other members of the Group and Thai officials who work on matters related to Australia. Members then observed a meeting of the House of Representatives and inspected Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall, the old Parliament House. This is built in a classical style and was constructed by His Majesty King Chulalongkorn, the present monarch's grandfather, to demonstrate Thailand's capacity to emulate European buildings.

56. **General Chavalit Yodmani**, Secretary-General of the Office of Narcotics Control Board (ONCB), expressed appreciation for assistance from the Australian Attorney General's Department in the setting up of ONCB's computer system, and to continuing

discussion and his presence and cooperation were clearly welcomed by the ONCB. Thailand still needed further support in such areas as intelligence, narcotics suppression, dealing with money laundering and computer support when that project was finalised in 1996.

57. Thailand's successful experience with crop replacement policies among the Hill tribes could not be relaxed in case the world demand for opium increased. General Chavalit also discussed Thailand's successes in drug seizures, and questions such as the legalisation of some drugs, the use of barbiturates, anti-smoking campaigns and the spread of HIV/AIDS by drug users and among the heterosexual community.

58. Within Thailand's immediate region, important political issues remained to be solved in Burma before a crop replacement strategy could be introduced. A distinction was drawn between the Thai's achievements in crop replacement strategies for its Hill tribes and those in neighbouring countries, where not much of this work has been done. Given the difficult border conditions, the power of the warlord Khun Sa in the north east of Burma remained a threat.

59. The existence of a large refinery and the presence of former Kuomintang army personnel along the Southern Chinese border, the continuing use of opium within China and national sovereignty issues, meant Thailand could not remain immune from outside influences. An additional difficulty was the impact of the opening up of Vietnam and Laos. Using the knowledge it had gained, Thailand was willing to train officers from these countries but General Chavalit said it would still need assistance to provide the necessary resources.

60. That evening, the delegation flew from Bangkok to Udon Thani and drove to Nong Khai. On arrival, the party was met by HE Mr Roland Rich, the Australian Ambassador to the Lao Peoples' Democratic Republic (PDR).

#### Visit to Nong Khai and the Friendship Bridge

61. On Thursday 24 November 1994, the Deputy Governor of Nong Khai Province, **Mr Anan Changklib**, informed the delegation of the similarity of the language and culture of the region to that of the Lao PDR. He stressed the importance of the Friendship Bridge over the Mekong River as a means of increasing trade, economic contacts and investment between Thailand and Laos, Vietnam, Southern China and Cambodia. Since the opening of the bridge in April 1994, tourism to the area had increased. The Holiday Inn Mekong Royal Hotel, where the party stayed, overlooks the bridge and the great deal of construction on the approaches to the Thai side was evidence of its new but great importance to Nong Khai.

62. Students from Nong Khai who want to go to university have to do so at Khon Kaen, and, as the province is interested in attracting students from Laos, it is ready to cooperate with any other sponsor in the setting up of a university at Nong Khai.

63. Although the Deputy Governor said there were no problems with the operations of the bridge, at this stage cars are not automatically free to be driven across into Laos. Customs and migration procedures are undertaken on both sides of the river border. There is a curfew which restricts use of the bridge. It is also apparent that the condition of the road system to and in Vientiane would create difficulties for the Lao authorities.

64. The delegation visited the public viewing area on the Thai side of the Mekong River, and drove to the middle of the bridge to inspect the plaque commemorating its opening before proceeding to the Lao Border Control Facility. As cars in Laos drive on the right hand side of the road, there is a traffic interchange which handles the change from driving on the left from Thailand very efficiently.

65. The visit to Laos is included in a special section at the end of this report.

#### **Visit to Chiang Mai**

66. At the **Northern AIDS Prevention and Care (NAPAC) Program** office and resource centre on Friday 25 November 1994, the delegation was briefed by Dr Seri Phongphit, Program Manager, and Ms Prue Borthwick, Program Development Specialist, on HIV/AIDS in Thailand and in Chiang Mai Province in particular. NAPAC is the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau's (AIDAB) main project on HIV/AIDS in Thailand. Its work is focussed on the needs of Chiang Mai Province and reflects a very severe situation.

67. Thai government estimates of those who are HIV positive and those with AIDS are likely to be under-estimated by as much as 25 per cent. Many deaths are not registered as being caused by AIDS, in part probably because opportunistic infections, such as tuberculosis, are very prevalent and also tend to kill very quickly. Although all ministries were now involved, the pandemic was only recognised as such within the last five years. Since 1991, in particular, the resources devoted to the pandemic have increased greatly, but there have been some problems with the implementation of agreed measures. Public health officials are keen to spend the available funds as efficiently as possible. Some of Australia's experiences have been useful.

68. Tolerance of brothels in Northern Thailand assists the spread of the virus. The almost universal use of condoms in those places, it was suggested, meant the likelihood of contracting HIV is higher elsewhere. The women from this region are in demand to work in brothels around the nation and this, combined with the mobility of commercial sex workers, has accelerated the spread of the virus in Thailand. NAPAC has funded

one project for work in gay bars and consideration is being given to another, but only one Thai NGO is working with gays and gay sex workers.

69. The **San Pa Tong Women's Paper Making Project** involves women working in their own villages making paper products, generating income and keeping them in these villages. The delegation was able to see groups of women involved in all aspects of the process of making paper.

70. At the **Friends for Life Project**, an AIDS hospice run by the monk Phra Pongthep Dhammagaruko, a program of slides set out the project's work in assisting HIV sufferers and those dying of AIDS. An inspection of some of the facilities followed.

71. **Mr Payoon Meethongkham**, Deputy Governor of Chiang Mai Province, explained the way provincial governors are appointed, and something of the system of provincial administration in Thailand. Because of its location close to the border, Chiang Mai is one of four provinces in the north and west which have a close involvement with Burmese refugees. The major problems facing the provincial administration are rural poverty and pollution, especially water contamination. Australia has funded many important projects in the province.

72. Chiang Mai will be 700 years old in 1996 and will host the South East Asian Games in December 1995. This competition is seen as important for the preparation of the Thai teams for the 1996 and 2000 Olympic Games.

73. In the evening, members attended a northern-style khan tok dinner at the Thai Cultural Centre.

#### **Visit to the Northern Region Industrial Estate**

74. On the morning of Saturday 26 November 1994, the delegation drove from Chiang Mai to the Northern Region Industrial Estate in Muang District, in neighbouring Lamphun Province, to inspect an Australian-owned and then a Japanese-owned factory.

75. At **Techtronics International Ltd**, Mr Alex von Schlippe, the Australian Manufacturing Director, briefed the delegation on the operations of the factory which produces a range of metal heads for golf clubs. Research for the operation was undertaken in Melbourne and the product is exported, principally to Japan and Taiwan. Since the company began operations in 1989, management has faced a variety of problems including training workers and supervisors and increasing production towards the target needed for profitable operation. Although in a duty free zone for ten years, the operation is not promoted by the BOI. An inspection followed, with further discussion of working conditions in Thailand and how foreign companies establish themselves in Thailand.

76. The delegation also visited the **Thai Yamakura Co Ltd** factory where senior staff explained the operation of the factory which makes high quality gloves for the golfing market in Japan.

#### Visit to Mae Moh Lignite Mine, Lampang

77. **Mr Max Brown**, the Managing Director and Principal Operations Adviser of LotusHall Ltd, a subsidiary of Kinhill Engineering Pty Ltd, briefed the delegation on the Mae Moh open cut lignite mine and the operations of the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT). In particular, he dealt with:

- . AIDAB involvement in this significant project and benefits to Australia;
- . the demand for electricity in Thailand and the amount generated at the mine;
- . the amount of waste and lignite produced by the mine;
- . relocations of villages;
- . the reclamation program in operation at the mine site; and
- . water supply and environmental problems, and their solutions.

78. The delegation then made an extensive tour of the mine, including wetlands, reclaimed sites and the floor of the pit itself, before returning to Lampang and flying back to Bangkok.

#### Visit to Hua Hin

79. On Monday 28 November 1994, staff at **Rajamangala Institute of Technology (RIT)**, Klai Kangwoi Campus, briefed the party on the purpose and operations of the Institute. Details were given of staff and student numbers, the range and costs of courses, the number of campuses and the joint association between RIT, the South Australian Department for Employment, Training and Further Education and SAGRIC International which is that government's technology transfer and international project management arm.

80. In keeping with the emphasis in the Hua Hin area, which European tourists are now visiting, many courses at RIT had an emphasis on the hospitality industry and tourism. The local hotel industry is involved in developing curriculums.

81. Following an inspection of some of the facilities at RIT, the delegation left for Ratchaburi and an appointment with the Provincial Governor, **M R Gamloonthep Devakula**.

82. The Governor gave an excellent briefing on the role of provincial administrations in Thailand and listed the tasks his organisation carried out within the Province. He also

gave details of the number and range of its industries, the benefits of its central location and, of more importance, arrangements for the Burmese persons of concern at the Safe Area in the province.

83. He then hosted lunch at a local hotel which the province had sponsored.

84. M R Gamloonthep accompanied the delegation to the **Safe Area for Burmese students and political exiles**, where the range of activities was explained. This was followed by an inspection of the facilities, discussions with some of the residents in their quarters. The delegation met a number of residents who had made application for refugee status in and migration to Australia.

85. That evening in Bangkok, the delegation hosted a reception with an educational focus, including Thai alumni of Australian universities and staff of Thai universities. In this context, the Embassy is producing a magazine directed towards the Thai alumni of Australian universities.

#### Mahanakorn University of Technology

86. Associate Professor Sitthichai Pookaiyudom, the Vice-Chancellor, is doubly a graduate of the University of New South Wales (UNSW) and markedly sympathetic to Australia and things Australian. He gave a comprehensive briefing on the establishment of the university, the number of staff and students, the range of courses offered and its fee structure. He also provided some general comments on the university system in Thailand from the perspective of a new, private university which specialises in engineering education.

87. Professor Sitthichai drew attention to the consequences of rote learning in the school system, and to the common university entrance examination system, suggesting they were destroying the country. These factors combine to reduce the need for students to think and directed all efforts simply to passing the examination. Thus, when some students arrived at Mahanakorn, the shock of exposure to another system revealed their poor work habits which did not enable them to keep up with the workload.

88. He also discussed a classification of Thai universities, drawn up two years ago by an AIDAB consultant. Mahanakorn's degree was categorised as a diploma, and it was placed in the last group because it was new and small, despite the fact that the quality of its degree was superior to that of some other institutions which were placed in the top group. UNSW, which had worked with Mahanakorn to establish the engineering curriculum, had submitted a correcting statement.

89. This was followed by an inspection of facilities and discussions with staff members, including some from UNSW. These facilities are modern and impressive and, because teaching is carried out seven days per week, in use more than at most universities. The

university is continuing to develop its facilities and a large building is under construction on the site. The Chancellor, Professor Sitthichai and senior staff hosted a lunch at which staff and students provided a cultural display of music and dance.

90. The delegation was greatly impressed by the achievements at Mahanakorn University, and the benefits of its continuing association with UNSW.

#### Industry visits

91. At Thai Leighton Ltd's **Muang Thong Bangna Project**, Mr Will Hamilton said that the client's brief for this turnkey project had called for the design and construction of 26 apartment blocks: 5396 apartments of four different sizes, 342 shops, a commercial centre, a swimming pool and all roads and infrastructure on a site about 20 kilometres outside Bangkok. Thai Leighton completed the project in 30 months.

92. Mr Hamilton also drew attention to Thailand's construction market which is over-supplied with hotels, office blocks and condominiums. He also discussed the difficulties of working with joint venture partners in Thailand, but added that Australians were popular in Thailand and its firms could do well if they showed patience in seeking to do business. The delegation heard this message many times during its visit.

93. An inspection of a completed block suggested that the group in Thai society which had benefited from the country's high rate economic growth in recent years was demanding a higher standard of accommodation. These apartments represent a change to the accommodation which would be found in more traditional houses around the klongs. One feature of these apartments which highlighted a difference between Australian and Thai houses was the lack of cooking facilities. The occupants of these blocks will eat most of their meals at the restaurants incorporated in the project.

94. At **Powauto (Thailand)**, a division of Clyde Industries Ltd, the delegation was briefed by the General Manager, Mr Graeme Wright, on the company's operations and its wish to earn 30 per cent of its net income from Asia within five years. The Thai factory's operations began in November 1993 making a range of hydraulic pumps for the ten wheeled, 30 tonne trucks which are the basis of Thailand's transportation system. It also makes power takeoffs for 300 types of vehicles. A second facility is under construction on the site adjacent to Powauto.

95. Mr Wright outlined the conditions under which the BOI allowed the firm to operate and stressed its commitment to training its Thai employees. He also referred to Thailand's strategic location and its wish to be the hub of the car industry in Asia. As in many other areas, there could be opportunities for Australia in this situation.

#### Round Table Discussions

96. At the **National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB)**, on the last day of its program the delegation was briefed by Mr Thamarak Karnpisit, the Deputy Secretary-General, on the Board's advisory role on economic and social policy. He referred to the changes which have occurred since the NESDB's establishment 30 years ago and its current inter-disciplinary focus on human resource development and environmental issues.

97. The main points which arose during the two subsequent presentations were:

- . the increased role for the private sector in government planning;
- . measures to reduce poverty and economic disparities within Thailand;
- . diversification outside Bangkok and the creation of Investment Promotion Zones; and
- . Thailand's plans to implement its wish to be central in its region.

98. During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- . the impact on the Thai workforce of deficiencies in the educational system;
- . deregulation and increasing privatisation of the education system;
- . planning for satellite cities around Bangkok;
- . studies on infrastructure problems, especially in the transportation system, and future energy needs;
- . the possibility of creating additional Investment Promotion Zones;
- . government involvement in such areas as incentives for training and research and development; and
- . the restructuring of Thai industry and tariffs.

99. At the **Thailand Institute of Public Policy Studies**, there was an extensive round-table discussion, chaired by Professor Chai-anan Samudavanija. The Institute's building, formerly occupied by the Goethe Institute, has been restored and refurbished and houses some spectacular art work.

100. A number of eminent people, in a variety of fields, had been brought together for discussion:

Major General Boonsrang Niempradit  
Director, National Defence Studies Institute  
Supreme Command

Associate Professor Somikat Osothsabha  
Faculty of Economics  
Chulalongkorn University

Dr Seksan Prasertkul  
Faculty of Political Science  
Thammasat University

Ms Parichart Chotiya  
Vice President  
Chaiyong Limthongkul Foundation

Mr Paradej Payakvichien  
Deputy Governor  
Tourism Authority of Thailand

Mr Witoon Permpongsacharoen  
Director, Project for Ecological Recovery.

101. After giving an overview of Thai-Australian relations, Professor Chai-anan mentioned the future of Australia's involvement in Thailand. In this respect, he referred to the excellence of the National Thai Studies Centre (NTSC) attached to the Australian National University in Canberra and its importance in educating Australians about Thailand.

102. Among the other issues raised in the following general discussion were:

- . problems in Thailand caused by industrial growth and pollution;
- . the inefficiency of demand side management in Thailand;
- . eco-tourism in Thailand and opportunities for Australia;
- . the range of military problems in Thailand's region;
- . maritime security and piracy in waters adjacent to Thailand;
- . the linkage of development assistance and trade which has seen Australian firms prosper;
- . environmental concerns highlighted by plans to build dams in Laos; and
- . criticisms of Australian foreign policy in South East Asia and Indo-China, including then recent and specific comments by the Australian Foreign Minister about the relationship between Thailand and the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia.

103. Both at this meeting and on a number earlier occasions, reference was made to alleged support given by the Thai military to the Khmer Rouge. On each occasion the view emerged that it was no longer so. The delegation accepted this position and recognised that it was an issue of sensitivity, and believes that there has been no continuing adverse effect on Australia-Thai relations.

104. Some of the views expressed were presented in what could have been a provocative way, and seemed resentful of any Australian achievements in Cambodia, Vietnam and the region generally. Such views were contested by the delegation.

### Discussions with Thai Trade Union Leaders

105. At the Thai Parliament, the delegation met trade union leaders who have been appointed to the Senate by the government. Members were told that an amendment to the labour relations act, with the effect of lifting a ban on public sector unions, was under consideration in Parliament. A considerable amount of work is under way in Thailand on such issues as the protection of children in the workforce, working conditions and additions to the school curriculum to explain workers' rights to those about to join the workforce. None of the labour leaders present had had any reports of dangerous working conditions at Australian factories in Thailand and all were positive about management practices by Australian firms.

106. The structure of the labour movement in Thailand was explained, as was the variation in union membership within businesses which was impeded by the requirement to have at least ten workers to form a union within a business.

### The Delegation's Views

107. These visits to Thailand and Laos highlighted the importance of both countries and their significance for Australia. The particular relationship with Thailand will be dealt with in the report on the Committee's reference, while Australia's relations with Laos are considered in a separate section below.

108. Relations with Thailand need to be taken seriously by both Australian businesses and governments. It is a country of great significance, especially in ASEAN and in its region, with Burma and China as its neighbours. For Australians, issues of the greatest importance are those of the cultural and linguistic challenges of doing business in Thailand. Many Thais speak excellent English: many were educated here and the language is taught at schools in Thailand.

109. Evidence presented to the Committee's inquiry makes it clear that few Australians speak Thai and know anything of the culture of Thailand, especially its business culture. This evidence also highlights the importance of long term commitments by those Australians who wish to develop commercial links with that country. Evidence to the delegation from a range of companies and businesses demonstrated the importance of that commitment. On the other hand, those who did not commit themselves proved unsuccessful and blamed anything but themselves and their attitudes.

110. In every Asian market the need to understand the language and culture is vital. Certainly this is so with the Thai language and culture. In this respect, the delegation took particular note of the observation of Professor Chai-anan of the Institute of Public Policy Studies regarding the importance of the NTSC.

111. In the context of Australian-Thai relations, the importance of this body is apparent. For Thailand there is no equivalent to such a body as the Australia-China Council and the NTSC tends to oversee such things as cultural exchanges, publications or visits. The support given by the University, with the Department of Employment, Education and Training's financial support is of continuing importance. Suggestions received separately in evidence to the Committee of threats to funding for the NTSC are viewed with alarm.

112. The Committee's report on relations with Thailand will be more complete as a result of the discussions held there and the opportunity to observe something of that nation's development at first hand. The delegation would like to express its gratitude to all those in the Kingdom of Thailand for giving of their time to explain the Thai position on a wide range of issues. The unstinting assistance by the Australian Embassy in Bangkok before and during the visit is also greatly appreciated.

### Recommendation

113. The Committee recommends that:

- 1 **the Department of Employment, Education and Training examine all of the issues relevant to its funding of the National Thai Studies Centre at the Australian National University, with a view to ensuring its continued operation under conditions no less favourable than those which have applied to date.**

### Laos

114. The Lao PDR is a small (236,800 square kilometres) land-locked country which has borders with Cambodia, Vietnam, Burma and China as well as Thailand. About one third of Thailand's population is ethnically Lao and the Lao and Thai languages are mutually comprehensible. Laos has a population of about 4.4 million people, increasing at about 2.9 per cent per year, of whom about 80 per cent live in rural areas. French is still widely used in some official circles as a legacy of the colonisation which ended in 1954. Buddhism is the major religion.

115. Laos is a one party state which was established on 2 December 1975, but which has liberalised gradually in the past five years. The removal of support from the former Soviet Union has had a profound effect and the country is now much more open to a range of Western influences than at any time since 1975. In August 1991, the Supreme Peoples' Assembly adopted a new Constitution, the first since 1975, and the government has moved from a hard line totalitarian regime to one in which economic realities have a greater influence than ideology. The new Constitution formalised the establishment of

a market-oriented economy and guarantees the right of Lao citizens to own private property and protects foreign and domestic investment.

116. Australian exports to Laos in 1993/94 were \$A25.2 million, while imports from Laos totalled \$A0.044 million. Australia exports non-monetary gold, silver and platinum, legal tender coin and telecommunications equipment and imports a small quantity of miscellaneous, basic manufactured articles. In 1993, Laos' global trade deficit was \$US185.9 million.

117. Thailand is demonstrably larger than Laos and the latter wishes to preserve its separate identity. The two countries will remain close, but there are extensive plans for a number of dams on rivers in the north of Laos to generate hydro electricity for sale, principally to Thailand.

118. The Australian Prime Minister visited Laos in April 1994 and that visit was greatly appreciated by those who were involved in Laos. A number of Lao Ministers have visited Australia and there have also been visits to Vientiane by Australian Ministers and, in 1993, by an Australian Parliamentary delegation led by Senator Jim McKeirnan.

### Visit to Laos: Thursday 24 November 1994

119. The delegation drove to the National Assembly building in Vientiane for discussions with members of its committees. The leader of the Lao delegation, **Mr Samane Souvannasao**, referred to the importance of the visit to Laos by the Australian Prime Minister. He expressed the hope that the visit by the Parliamentary delegation would be another significant factor in the ties of friendship and cooperation between the legislatures, governments and peoples of the two countries.

120. Details were given of the elections for and structure of the National Assembly, and of the health and education systems. In the area of public health, Laos would appreciate the support of friendly countries to overcome the problems which exist. As 85 per cent of the population is illiterate it has a shortage of qualified individuals for every purpose, including administration of the National Assembly, membership of world and regional bodies and management of the economy.

121. The Assembly has been drafting laws, of which there are 25 at present, in such areas as nationality, contracts, torts, taxation, security for tourists and regulation of the investment market. Legislation will also be required in education and public health.

122. Laos signed ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in July 1992 and has also been granted observer status at the annual ASEAN Ministerial Meetings. Full membership may follow in time.

123. **Dr Khamlieng Pholsena**, Chair of the National Assembly's Committee on Foreign Relations, said that, although preparations were under way for membership of ASEAN, for the time being Laos lacks the skills to join that body. Laos has good relations with all its neighbours and saw the Friendship Bridge as a token of friendship and cooperation between the three countries involved. He reiterated the point made during discussions with members of the National Assembly's committees: that Laos' priority need is for the development of its people, and that Australian assistance would be appreciated.

124. **Dr Somphavanh Inthavong**, Chair of the National Assembly's Committee on Economy, Planning and Finance, pointed out the small size of the Lao economy and its reliance on development assistance. Details were also given of its overseas investments, various construction plans for dams in the north and the use of timber concessions to assist the viability of a toll road north to the Chinese border. The hydro-electric power which will be generated from the dams will be sold, principally to Thailand, earning significant amounts of money for the Lao economy.

125. The Ambassador then hosted a lunch to which members of the National Assembly, Lao officials who work on Australian matters and some Australian advisers had been invited. The guest list for this function is at Appendix C.

126. The Ambassador took delegation members on an inspection of Embassy facilities. The residence belongs to the United Kingdom Government, for whom Australia acts in Laos. The Chancery building is inadequate and there are plans for a rebuilding program which are dependent on the availability of funds. The Clinic within the grounds provides medical services for Embassy staff and other expatriates.

127. The Australian Embassy Recreation Club, on a site purchased by a former Ambassador, is now independent of the Embassy and returns a profit on its operations. It has a range of facilities, including a swimming pool, overlooking the Mekong River and is a popular meeting place for the Australian community in Vientiane. There the delegation met with expatriate Australians and representatives of Australian businesses. The guest list for this function at Appendix D demonstrates the number and variety of both groups in Laos. This was a very worthwhile function as it gave all of those present the chance to exchange views on the region, and on Australia's present and possible roles in Laos in particular.

128. At the conclusion of its program in Vientiane, the delegation drove back across the Friendship Bridge to Udon Thani and flew to Chiang Mai via Bangkok.

#### **The Delegation's Views**

129. The National Assembly and Laotian officials were greatly pleased by the delegation's visit. The visit by the 1993 delegation was also remembered positively by all the Laotian participants. Of all the foreign governments represented in Vientiane,

Australia has been there longest and without any gaps. Such a happy situation is worth continuing and reinforcing and there are ways to do this, such as ensuring the National Assembly is invited to send a delegation to the Australian Parliament, and that Laos is included in programs on a more regular basis when Australian delegations visit the region.

130. The Chancery building is in need of thorough renovation if not complete replacement. Some staff are working in inappropriate conditions and there have been accidents as a result, for example, of the state of staircases. The residence seems suitable for its representational purposes and an effort should be made to acquire it, or purchase something equally appropriate.

131. There is already a significant Australian presence in Laos which can only grow as a result of the planned dams and hydro-electric power generation program. Economically, Laos is significantly behind Thailand and Australia is in a good position to provide a significant development assistance program. Given the size of Laos and its population, it would not need to be large or expensive. There are three areas where a well-directed program would be of immense value to the Laotian people, and also maintain Australia's high profile in the country: provision of infrastructure, public health and education.

132. Laos' infrastructure is deficient and, in particular, the condition of its roads is likely to be one of the reasons for restrictions on the use of the Friendship Bridge. It seems to present problems for Lao authorities for which they may not have the resources to provide solutions. There is a high level of illiteracy in Laos and it is unable to provide enough suitably qualified personnel so that it can participate in a range of regional and world bodies. In spite of all the work already done, there are many things still to be done in the public health area to combat diseases of various kinds.

133. The contrast between Thailand and Laos was very noticeable to the delegation. Australia has been represented in Laos for a long time and that small, vulnerable country has recently emerged from a totalitarian past. It needs assistance in a number of areas and there are already concerns being expressed about its dependence on Thailand as a result of the planned construction of dams and eventual sale of the power to be generated from them. The enthusiasm with which the delegation was greeted in Vientiane gave an indication of the importance of the relationship to the Laotians.

134. The opening of the Friendship Bridge in April 1994 was part of an ongoing process for Australia in the region. The high expectations which followed that opening, mainly greater ease of movement and trade initially between Thailand and Laos, seem to be faltering. It may be that Australian expertise, in consultation with Laotian authorities, could be useful.

135. The relationship with Laos appears to be particularly good and Australia is in a position to make a significant contribution through AIDAB and the development assistance budget.

136. The delegation is grateful to members of the National Assembly of the Laotian PDR and to the Australian community in Vientiane for the time they gave to the delegation. The support given by the Australian Embassy in Vientiane is also greatly appreciated.

#### Recommendations

137. The Committee recommends that:

- 2 the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade hold discussions with authorities of the Lao Peoples' Democratic Republic to establish whether Australia might be able to formulate programs which would help overcome deficiencies in the road system, health services and education; and
- 3 the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade take note of facilities at the Australian Embassy in Vientiane and buy the current residence, or acquire another equally appropriate property, and give priority to the redevelopment of facilities on the Chancery site.



L D T Ferguson, MP  
Delegation Leader

### ITINERARY: VISIT TO THAILAND AND LAOS

#### DELEGATION FROM JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE

FRIDAY 18 NOVEMBER TO THURSDAY 1 DECEMBER 1994

(Note: All times shown are local)

#### Friday 18 November 1994

3.30pm	QF 1 departs Melbourne (Mr Halverson)
5.00pm	Delegation to meet in the QANTAS Club, Sydney International Airport
6.15pm	QF 1 departs Sydney for Bangkok
11.25pm	QF 1 arrives in Bangkok Overnight Bangkok (Sukhothai Hotel)

#### Saturday 19 November 1994

10.15am	Depart hotel for embassy
10.30am	Briefing at Ambassador's residence
11.45am	Lunch hosted by Ambassador
1.30pm	Depart for Attakarn Prasit Apartment Project
1.40pm	Inspect site of new Embassy apartments
	Return to Sukhothai Hotel to collect overnight luggage
3.00pm	Travel to Kanchanaburi
6pm	Arrive Kanchanaburi
Evening	Free
	Overnight Kanchanaburi (Felix River Kwai Resort)

#### Sunday 20 November 1994

8.00am	Depart hotel for Hellfire Pass, War Cemetery and JEATH Museum
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2.00pm Depart for Bangkok  
 5.00pm Return to Sukhothai Hotel  
 7.00pm Informal dinner hosted by Prof Dr Prasop Ratanakorn, Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (Dusit Thani Hotel)  
 Overnight Bangkok (Sukhothai Hotel)

**Monday 21 November 1994**

7.30am Depart hotel  
 8.00am Call on Minister for Education, HE Mr Samphan Thongsamak  
 8.45am Call on Foreign Minister, HE Mr Thaksin Shinawatra  
 9.30am Call on Minister for Defence, HE Gen Vijit Sookmark  
 10.30am Call on Minister of Commerce, HE Mr Uthai Pimchaichon  
 11.15am Call on Minister for University Affairs, HE Dr Krasae Chanawongse  
 12noon Depart for the Central Plaza Hotel  
 12.30pm Lunch/briefing, Mr Somphong Wanapha, Director, Investment Promotion Division 1, Office of the Board of Investment (BOI)  
 2.30pm Depart for Ministry of Industry  
 3.00pm Call on Minister for Industry, HE Maj Gen Sanan Kajornprasart  
 4.30pm Arrive at hotel  
 5.45pm Depart hotel for residence  
 6pm Reception, Ambassador's residence (Thai NGOs, Australian NGOs, academics and social commentators)  
 Overnight Bangkok (Sukhothai Hotel)

**Tuesday 22 November 1994**

7.00am Breakfast meeting with members of the Australian business community and representatives of the Australian-Thai Chamber of Commerce (Noppamas Restaurant, Sukhothai Hotel)  
 9.30am Depart for Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
 10.00am Call on Dr Saroj Chavanaviraj, Deputy Permanent Secretary of Foreign Affairs for briefing on security matters  
 10.50am Depart for PDA  
 11.15am Call on Mr Mechai Viravaidya, Chair, Population and Community Development Association (PDA)  
 12noon Depart for the Regent Hotel  
 12.30pm Lunch with M R Pridiyathorn Devakula, President, Export-Import Bank of Thailand, Private Room, Regent Grill, Regent Hotel

2.15pm Depart Regent Hotel for General Finance and Securities Co Ltd  
 2.30pm Call on Dr Narongchai Akrasanee, President, Australia-Thailand Business Council (ATBC) - Thai Section  
 3.30pm Depart for National Security Council  
 4.00pm Call on Gen Charan Kullavanijaya, Secretary-General, National Security Council  
 5.00pm Return to hotel  
 Evening Free  
 Overnight Bangkok (Sukhothai Hotel)

**Wednesday 23 November 1994**

8.00am Depart for United Nations Building  
 8.30am Call on Mr Ruprecht von Arnim, Representative to Thailand of UNHCR  
 9.20am Depart for Thai Parliament  
 9.30am Courtesy call on HE Mr Marut Bunnag, President of the National Assembly and Speaker of the House of Representatives  
 10.00am Courtesy call on HE Mr Meechai Ruchupan, President of the Senate  
 10.30am-12noon Meet with select members of counterpart committees  
 12.15pm Lunch, hosted by Prof Dr Prasop Ratanakorn, Chairman, Thai-Australian Parliamentary Friendship Group  
 2.30pm Tour of Parliament, including Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall (Old Parliament House), and observe meeting of the House of Representatives  
 3.00pm Depart Parliament House for the Office of Narcotics Control Board (ONCB)  
 3.30pm Call on Gen Chavalit Yodmani, Secretary-General, ONCB (Briefing on the narcotics situation and cooperation with Australia)  
 4.15pm Depart ONCB for airport  
 5.00pm Arrive airport  
 5.30pm TG010 departs Bangkok  
 6.30pm Arrive Udon Thani, to Nong Khai by car  
 7.40pm Arrive Nong Khai  
 Evening Free  
 Overnight Nong Khai (Holiday Inn Mekhong Royal Hotel)

**Thursday 24 November 1994**

8.00am Call on Governor of Nong Khai, Mr Anan Changklib

8.30am Visit public viewing area and meet Thai officials involved with Friendship Bridge  
 By 9.30am Arrive Lao Border Control Facility  
 Travel to Vientiane  
 10.20am Arrive National Assembly, meet committee members  
 Reviews of Bilateral Relations, Regional Affairs, Parliamentary matters  
 12noon Travel to Ambassador's residence  
 12.30pm Lunch, hosted by Ambassador  
 2.15pm Discussions with Ambassador and staff  
 2.45pm Depart for Australian Embassy Recreation Club  
 3.00pm Meet Australian business community  
 4.30pm Vientiane to Lao Border Control Facility, then to Udon Thani by car  
 6.40pm Arrive Udon Thani  
 7.20pm Udon Thani-Bangkok, TG011  
 8.15pm Arrive Bangkok  
 9.30pm Bangkok-Chiang Mai, TG124  
 10.35pm Arrive Chiang Mai  
 Overnight Chiang Mai (Royal Princess Hotel)

**Friday 25 November 1994**

7.45am Depart hotel for NAPAC Resource Centre  
 8-9.15am Briefing and visit, NAPAC Resource Centre (Thai-Australian Northern AIDS Prevention and Care Program)  
 9.15am Proceed to San Pa Tong Sa Paper Making Project (known as the Enhancement of Women's Role and Development of Paper Manufacturing Project)  
 11.00am Depart San Pa Tong for Chiang Mai 11.45am-12.45pm: Lunch  
 12.45pm Travel to Friends for Life Project  
 1.10pm Visit the Friends for Life Project, an AIDS Hospice run by the monk, Phra Pongthep Dhammagaruko  
 2.10pm Depart for Provincial Administrative Centre, Chiang Mai  
 2.45pm Call on Deputy Governor of Chiang Mai, Mr Payoon Meethongkham  
 Evening Northern style dinner  
 Visit Night Markets  
 Overnight Chiang Mai (Royal Princess Hotel)

**Saturday 26 November 1994**

8.30am Depart hotel for Northern Region Industrial Estate, Lamphun

9.15am-11.00am Visit factories of Techtronics International Ltd and Thai Yamakura Co Ltd  
 11.00am Depart for Lampang  
 12noon-1.00pm Lunch  
 1.00pm Depart Lampang for Mae Moh  
 1.30pm-3.30pm Visit Mae Moh Lignite mine  
 3.30pm Depart for Lampang  
 5.05pm Lampang-Bangkok, TG163  
 6.55pm Arrive Bangkok  
 Evening Free  
 Overnight Bangkok (Sukhothai Hotel)

**Sunday 27 November 1994**

8.00am Travel to Hua Hin by road  
 Overnight Hua Hin (Royal Garden Village Resort)

**Monday 28 November 1994**

7.30am Depart hotel  
 8.00am Visit Rajamangala Institute of Technology, Klai Kangwoi Campus  
 Tour and discussion with administrators  
 10.00am Travel to Ratchaburi  
 11.30am Call on Governor of Ratchaburi, M R Gamloonthep Devakula  
 12noon Lunch hosted by Governor  
 1.00pm Depart for safe area  
 1.30pm Visit safe area for Burmese students and political exiles  
 3.00pm Depart safe area  
 4.30pm Arrive in Bangkok  
 6.00pm Briefing by the Australian Education Centre in Bangkok  
 6.30pm Reception: Education focus, at the Sukhothai Hotel, Ballroom II  
 Overnight Bangkok (Sukhothai Hotel)

**Tuesday 29 November 1994**

8.30am Depart hotel for Mahanakorn University of Technology  
 10.00am Arrive at Mahanakorn UT, briefing by academic staff, tour of campus  
 11.30am-1.00pm Lunch hosted by Assoc Prof Sittichai Pookaiyaudom, Vice-Chancellor, Mahanakorn UT

1.00pm Depart for Muang Thong Bang Na Housing Estate, Australian architects Nation and Fender and construction by Leighton Thailand

2.00pm-2.45pm Briefing and tour

2.45pm Depart for Powauto (Thailand) Ltd, a division of Clyde Industries Ltd

3.30pm-4.30pm Briefing and tour of plant 4.30pm: Return to Bangkok

6.30pm Arrive at Sukhothai Hotel

Evening Free

Overnight Bangkok (Sukhothai Hotel)

**Wednesday 30 November 1994**

6.00am Mr Hollis departs hotel for airport

7.55am QF 2 departs Bangkok (Mr Hollis)

8.30am Depart for National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB)

9.00am Joint briefing by NESDB and the Joint Public-Private Consultative Committee

10.30am Depart NESDB

11.00am-12.30pm Round table on bilateral relations with Thailand Institute of Public Policies Studies

12.30pm Lunch

2.00pm Depart for Parliament House

2.30pm Meet (Senator) representatives of the Thai trade union movement

3.15pm Return to the Sukhothai Hotel

4.30pm Press Conference, Ballroom 2, Sukhothai Hotel

5.00pm Embassy debriefing, Ballroom 2

Evening Free

Overnight Bangkok (Sukhothai Hotel)

**Thursday 1 December 1994**

By 5.00am All baggage, tickets etc available for collection

6.00am Depart hotel for Bangkok International Airport

7.55am QF 2 departs Bangkok

8.45pm QF 2 arrives Sydney

10.05pm QF 2 departs Sydney

11.30pm QF 2 arrives Melbourne (Mr Halverson)

**GUEST LIST FOR RECEPTION ON MONDAY 21 NOVEMBER 1994****Thai Non-Government Organisations**

Ms Thanavadee Thajeen

Co-ordinator

**Friends of Women Foundation:** A non-profit organisation whose main projects include: Women's Right Protection Centre, Shelter for Women, Information Centre and a project for Women Workers in Manufacturing Industries.

Ms Nicola Bullard

Information Officer

End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism (ECPAT) Information Centre.

A lobby group against the exploitation of children in the tourism and sex industries.

Mrs Prateep Ungsongtham Hata

Secretary General, Duang Prateep Foundation

and Mrs Rotjana Phraesrithong

Head of Public Relations, Head of International Section

**Duang Prateep Foundation:** A Thai Non-government Organisation which provides education and vocational training to children and youth in poor communities (slums), and provides co-ordination, services and support for slum self-development. The Foundation's activities also include promotion of youth development activities in slums, research and dissemination of information about slum problems. Mrs Prateep was also a core activist in the May 1992 demonstrations against military government.

Mr Boonthan Tansuthepveeravongse

Peace and Human Rights Program

**Asia Pacific Cultural Forum on Development:** This organisation's objectives are to co-ordinate various voluntary organisations working on development in Asian countries and encouraging the establishment of community institutions. The organisation also provides training for development workers.

Mr Parinya Thaewadaramitkul and Mr Somchai Homlaor

**Campaign for Popular Democracy:** This is an independent organisation which campaigns for the development of democracy in Thailand. It played a core role in the events of May 1992.

Mr Pisit na Patalung  
Secretary General  
Wildlife Fund Thailand

Ms Pairojana Sornjitti  
Director, Planning, Evaluation & International Affairs Bureau  
**Population & Community Development Association:** works on population control and HIV/AIDS prevention work.

Ms Laddawan Tantivitayapithak  
**Coalition for Peace and Development:** This organisation's objectives are to co-ordinate with the international peace movement in order to promote peace and to keep the public informed of peace issues as well as to heighten public awareness of the nuclear threat, weapons of mass destruction and other forms of violence.

Mr Saravuth Pratoomraj  
**Co-ordinating Group for Religion in Society:** The objectives of this group are to promote basic religious principles which enhance solidarity, justice and peace in society. Projects include providing legal aid for people in disputes with government officials, promoting prisoners' quality of life, training on nonviolent methods and organising training camp for inner self-development.

Chalida Thacharoensak and Mr Watcharraphan Chandkajorn  
**Thai Action Committee for Democracy in Burma**  
A coalition of Thai NGOs concerned about the situation in Burma.

Mr Pibob Udommittipong  
**Thai Inter-Religion Commission for Development.**

Ms Ratchada Chaisawat  
**Union for Civil Liberties:** This Union's main activities are campaigning and researching Human Rights issues. Its projects include the provision of legal aid, assistance to labourers and organisational assistance for farmers.

#### **Australian NGO's operating in Thailand**

Mr Chris McMahon  
Australian Volunteers Abroad

#### **Other NGO's**

Mr Zaw Gyi  
**Burma Information Group:** This group is involved with documenting human rights abuses in Burma, investigating situations of forced prostitution.

Mr Jack Dunford and Ms Sally Thompson  
**The Church of Christ in Thailand:** This organisation co-ordinates the delivery of food and medical assistance to 78,000 Burmese refugees along the Thai/Burma border. The Australian Government contributes AUS\$300,000 per year to the border relief effort.

Mr Peter Lee and Ms Christie Mulligan  
Freelance, working with Burmese refugees in Thailand.

Ms Chitra Thumborisuthi  
World Vision Foundation in Thailand and  
Dr Amaya Maw Naing  
Myanmar, Program Liaison Officer  
World Vision International  
**World Vision Foundation in Thailand:** This Foundation has objectives to provide educational and vocational assistance to children and their families and communities and to support local churches. Main projects are Child Sponsorship, Family Development and Community Development.

Ms Caroline Lurie and Mr Michael Durham  
**Burma Issues:** This is a private, non-profit organisation devoted to peaceful resolution of Burma's struggle for human rights and democratic rule through:

1. Grassroots organisation - mobilising under-represented people to develop the courage and confidence to express their concerns and ideas, and to participate effectively in the decision-making processes which affect their lives;
2. Information for action - supporting activities inside and outside Burma by supplying and helping to develop information especially as it relates to oppression, human rights and peace.
3. Campaign for peace - advocating, publicising and participating in international dialogue and action concerning human rights and peace in Burma.

Dr Alan Smith  
**Burmese Border Education**  
Dr Smith works closely with Burmese refugees along the Thai-Burma border.

Ms Donna K Anderton  
Representative  
Quaker International Affairs Program  
American Friends Service Committee

Dr Donna Robinson  
UNICEF Bangkok Area Office

#### Academics

Dr Weng Tojirakan  
Deputy Secretary  
The Confederation for Democracy

Dr Gotham Arya  
Campaign for Popular Democracy

#### Embassy Officials

Mr John Richardson  
Charge d'Affairs

Ms Annabel Anderson  
Counsellor, Political and Economic

Ms Zuli Chudori  
First Secretary, Political and Economic

Ms Lynda Ledwidge  
Second Secretary, Political and Economic

Mr Matthew Hynds  
Third Secretary, Political and Economic

Ms Trudy der Kinderen  
Administrative Assistant, Political and Economic

Ms Ellen Shipley  
Counsellor, AIDAB

Mr Andrew Whillas  
First Secretary, AIDAB

Mr Andrew Rowell  
Second Secretary, AIDAB

Ms Sudamani Bisalputra  
Senior Research Officer, Political and Economic

Ms Nirachara Samanphan  
Research Officer, Political and Economic

Ms Wasna Suwatcharapisit  
Visits Officer, Political and Economic

Ms Kornvipa Boonsue  
Senior Program Officer, AIDAB

Ms Matana Bunnag  
Senior Program Officer, AIDAB

Ms Thanawalai Jaroenjandang  
Senior Program Officer, AIDAB

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**GUEST LIST FOR BUFFET LUNCH**  
**24 November 1994**

Dr Khamlieng Pholsena  
Chairman  
Foreign Relations Committee  
National Assembly

Mr Samane Souvannasao  
Vice Chairman of Legal Committee  
National Assembly

Mr Thongsa Panyasith  
Vice Chairman of Legal Committee  
National Assembly

General Savay Sayasena  
National Assembly member

Mr Khampong Soulinphoumy  
National Assembly member

Mr Phosay Saypanya  
National Assembly member

Dr Sy Boulommavong  
National Assembly member

Mr Phailoth Vongvilath  
Director  
Foreign Relations Committee Secretariat

HE Mr Soubanh Srithirath  
Vice Minister  
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Mr Somphet Khounsakoune  
Deputy Director  
Department of Asia Pacific & Africa  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr Thongsavanh Phomvihane  
Director  
Department of International Organisation  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr Khampasong Douangsithi  
Deputy Director  
Department of Protocol  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr Phomma Khammanichanh  
Australia Desk  
Department of Asia Pacific & Africa  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr Sivath Phannouvong  
Director  
Friendship Bridge Border Control Facility

HE Mr Khamlouat Sidlakone  
Vice Minister  
Ministry of Communication, Transport  
Post and Construction

HE Mr Seune Phetsanghane  
Vice Minister  
Ministry of Communication, Transport  
Post and Construction

Mr Khan Ngeun Khamvongsa  
Ministry of Communication, Transport  
Post and Construction

HE Mr Sitaheng Rajphonh  
Vice Minister  
Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry

Mr Alom Thavonesouk  
Deputy Director  
Planning Department

Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry

Mr Langsy Xayvisith  
Director of Irrigation Department  
Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry

HE Mr Kithong Vongsay  
Vice Chairman  
Committee for Planning & Co-operation

Dr Houy Pholsena  
Chief of Cabinet  
Ministry of Justice

Mr Bryan Goddard  
Country Representative  
Upland Agricultural Development Project

Ms Angela Savage  
Red Cross

Ms Bouphe Pradith  
Enfants et Development

Ms Susan King  
Advisor  
Resource Centre for Teacher of English

Ms Gillian Mellsop  
First Secretary (DC)  
Australian Embassy

Ms Kathy Klugman  
Second Secretary  
Australian Embassy

Ms Carmel Sullivan  
Attache Nurse  
Australian Clinic

Mr Ounheune Phrakhamsay  
Australian Embassy

**GUEST LIST FOR AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS FUNCTION**  
**24 November 1994**

Mr Laurie Ferguson, MP	
Mr Robert Halverson, OBE, MP	
Mr Eric Fitzgibbon, MP	
Mr Colin Hollis, MP	
Mr David Jull, MP	
Rt Hon Ian Sinclair, MP	
Mr Hans Fischer	Transfield
Mr Brian McIllree	Transfield
Mr John Abraham	CRA
Mr Steve Lawrence	CRA
Mr Mark Reid	Simon & Associates
Mr Gordon Hay	John Holland Construction
Mr David Pollard	
Mr Christopher Kremmer	ABC (Hanoi Correspondent)
Mr Ken Tustin	Lao Westcoast Helicopters
Mr Alan Guy	Guy Investments
Mr Mike Harris	Normandy Anglo Asian
Mr John Wroe	Normandy Anglo Asian
Ms Sue Ma	Auslaos Investments
Mr Mark Sigma	Auslaos Investments
Mr Rorie Wust	CRA
Mr Scott Roach	
Ms Edwina Harris	TNT Express Worldwide
Mr Jean Francois Renaudin	Simon Lao
Mr Tao Tong	
Mr Graham Maher	HEC
Mr Jeff Anderson	
Mr Paul Simcock	Kevron
Mr Chris Burrows	
Mr Ron Hawkins	Milsearch
Mr Joe Rumble	
Mr Mark Liersch	SMEC
Mr Ian Dillaway	SMEC
Mr Douglas Handisides	Lao Techno
Mr Tony Borchardt	Maunsell Sinclair Knight
Mr Harold Christensen	Lao Survey

Mr Keith Jolly	
Mr Peter Routley	Anglican Relief Development Agency
Mr Tim Fahey	Paradigm Training
Mr Bruce Bolar	Telstra
Mr Barry Blackie	Thiess
Mr Denley Pike	Advanced Training Centre
Mr Steve Warner	CRA
Mr Antony Manini	CRA
Mr Harry Dickenson	
Ms Billie Hay	
Mr Alex Beilby	
Mr Peter Warr	Anutech
Mr Bill Kelly	Maunsell Sinclair Knight
Mr Tony Burns	BHP
Mr Paul Nankivell	PDP Australia
Mr John Delves	BHP
Mr Chris Lunnay	SA Dept of Environment & Natural Resources
Mr Kevin Nettle	CALM
Mr Sue Ma	Auslaos Investment Pty Ltd
Mr Prasert Bancholpkady	Auslaos Investment Pty Ltd
Mr Sam Souksamrane	Lao Attwood
Mr Poul Souksamrane	MKM Trading