

PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

**Report of the Parliamentary
Delegation to the European
Parliament and Estonia, 3-9
October 2017**

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Delegation Leader

Senator David Fawcett, Senator for South Australia

Mr Andrew Giles MP, Member for Scullin

Ms Melissa Price MP, Member for Durack

Senator Helen Polley, Senator for Tasmania

Mr Rowan Ramsey MP, Member for Grey

Ms Cate Clunies-Ross, Chief-of-Staff to the Speaker

Ms Lynley Ducker, Delegation Secretary

Abbreviations

D-ANZ	Delegation for relations with Australia and New Zealand
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
EU	European Union
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America

Contents

Delegation members	iii
Abbreviations.....	v

The Report

1	Introduction.....	1
	Aims and objectives	1
	Acknowledgements	2
2	Strasbourg.....	3
	Background	3
	Meeting with rapporteurs for the Australia-EU Free Trade Agreement	3
	Meeting with rapporteurs for the EU-Australia Framework Agreement	5
	Meeting with President of the European Parliament	6
	Meeting with Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee.....	7
	Meeting with Secretary-General	8
	38th EU-Australia Inter-Parliamentary meeting.....	9
	Additional activities.....	13
3	Brussels.....	15
	NATO	15
	European Commission	17
4	Ieper (Ypres)	19
	Last Post	19

	Battlefields visit	20
5	Estonia	23
	Sunday program.....	24
	Meeting with President Nestor	24
	Meeting with Vice-Chairman Pentus-Rosimannus	25
	Meeting with Deputy Minister Maasikas	26
	Official lunch	27
	Appendix A. Delegation program	29

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report gives an account of the Australian Parliamentary Delegation to the European Parliament and institutions, and Estonia, from 3–9 October 2017.
- 1.2 Chapter 2 discusses the meetings held in Strasbourg during the sitting week of the European Parliament, including the 38th Australia-European Union Inter-parliamentary meeting.
- 1.3 Chapter 3 discusses the meetings held in Brussels with the European Commission and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).
- 1.4 Chapter 4 outlines the activities the delegation participated in around Ieper, including the Last Post ceremony at the Menin Gate.
- 1.5 Chapter 5 discusses the meetings held in Tallinn, Estonia, with members of the Riigikogu (the Estonian Parliament) and officials.
- 1.6 Appendix A contains the delegation program.

Aims and objectives

- 1.7 The delegation's aims and objectives were to:
 - participate in the 38th Australia-European Union Inter-parliamentary meeting;
 - build and strengthen parliamentary ties with Estonia in light of their current presidency of the Council of the European Union;
 - participate in commemoration ceremonies in Ieper (Ypres);
 - undertake meetings with European institutions in the context of the recently signed Framework Agreement with Australia and the upcoming negotiations for the Australia-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA); and

- discuss with European institutions and NATO other issues of key concern to Australia, as outlined below.
- 1.8 Across all its meetings, the delegation focussed on the following areas of importance:
- the importance of free trade and the significance of exporting to Australia's economy;
 - security concerns in Australia's region;
 - strengthening relationships with our allies;
 - balancing cyber security and digital innovation;
 - issues for Europe and Australia resulting from Brexit; and
 - challenges posed by terrorism and non-state actors.
- 1.9 The delegation's objectives were met. The discussions with parliamentary colleagues and officials were open, broad-ranging and constructive. It is clear that Australia, the EU and Estonia continue to have close links and share many common values.

Acknowledgements

- 1.10 Prior to departure, the delegation received helpful written briefings from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the Parliamentary Library.
- 1.11 During the visit, the delegation was accompanied by DFAT officers in each location. These officers provided comprehensive briefings and impeccable logistical assistance. The delegation greatly appreciates the effort that went into creating such a productive and seamless visit.
- 1.12 The delegation would also like to thank the European Parliament, the Estonian Parliament and government, and NATO for their hospitality.
- 1.13 Finally, as parliamentarians, the delegation recognises and greatly appreciates the time given to the delegation by our European colleagues in Strasbourg during a busy sitting week.

2. Strasbourg

Background

- 2.1 The delegation travelled to Strasbourg to meet with members of the European Parliament. The European Parliament has 751 Members directly elected by voters in the 28 member states. These Members represent over 500 million people.
- 2.2 The European Parliament shares decision-making power with the European Council and the Council of the European Union (EU). The European Council is composed of the heads of state of the member states, and defines the general political direction and policies of the EU.
- 2.3 The Council of the European Union (also known as the Council of Ministers) consists of government ministers selected from each member country according to the policy area to be discussed. The Council of the European Union has both executive and legislative powers and, together with the European Parliament, is the main decision-making body of the EU.
- 2.4 The European Parliament meets in plenary session in both Strasbourg and Brussels. Generally, each year Parliament holds 12 four-day part-sessions in Strasbourg and six two-day part sessions in Brussels. Parliamentary committees meet in Brussels. The delegation was pleased to be able to meet Members of the European Parliament during a sitting week in Strasbourg.

Meeting with rapporteurs for the Australia-EU Free Trade Agreement

- 2.5 On 3 October 2017, the delegation met with MEP Daniel Caspary (Germany), the parliamentary rapporteur for the Australia-EU Free Trade Agreement

(FTA) and shadow rapporteurs MEP Karoline Graswander-Hainz (Austria), MEP Anne-Marie Mineur (Netherlands) and MEP Klaus Buchner (Germany).

- 2.6 In a joint statement on 15 November 2015 the Australian Prime Minister, the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission agreed to start the process towards a Free Trade Agreement (FTA).
- 2.7 In order to commence formal negotiations, the European Parliament must pass a negotiating mandate for the Commission to start trade negotiations. As part of the parliamentary process, this mandate goes before the International Trade Committee for its opinion and proposed amendments. The final vote in the Parliament is scheduled for 26 October 2017.
- 2.8 Mr Caspary emphasised the commitment of the EU to removing obstacles to trade, while balancing both the benefits and the costs to EU members. It is important that Australia shares the EU's commitment to an international rules-based system and the application of high standards in areas such as environmental and labour regulation.
- 2.9 The delegation agreed with Mr Caspary in relation to the shared values of Australia and the EU, and the joint commitment to free trade. The meeting discussed the importance of informing members of the public about the benefits of FTAs, and agreed that transparency during negotiations was a difficult question of judgment and balance.
- 2.10 The delegation asked about the impact of Brexit on the EU. Mr Caspary outlined the complexities of leaving the EU, and the EU's approach to the negotiations. The European Parliament had passed a resolution on the day of the meeting (3 October 2017) outlining its view that sufficient progress in certain key areas has not been made. Mr Caspary advised the delegation that the UK was unable to conclude any trade agreements on its own behalf until after it had left the EU.

Figure 2.1 Delegation with FTA rapporteurs



Delegation with (l-r) MEP Karoline Graswander-Hainz, MEP Daniel Caspary, MEP Anne-Marie Mineur and MEP Klaus Buchner.

Meeting with rapporteurs for the EU-Australia Framework Agreement

- 2.11 The delegation met with MEP Francisco Millán Mon (Spain), the parliamentary rapporteur for the EU-Australia Framework Agreement, and shadow rapporteurs MEP Ivo Vajgl (Slovenia) and MEP Jaromir Kohlicek (Czechia).
- 2.12 The EU-Australia Framework Agreement was signed on 7 August 2017. The Framework Agreement will guide Australia’s future engagement by providing a treaty-level institutional framework for bilateral cooperation on a broad range of issues.¹ Before being implemented, the Framework

¹ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Brief for Parliamentary Delegation Meeting with the European Parliament October 2017*, September 2017, p 2.

Agreement must go through a ratification process in the EU, the 28 member states, and Australia.

- 2.13 Mr Millán Mon emphasised that Australia and the EU were natural partners with shared values. He advised that although the Framework Agreement was non-controversial, it would still take time to complete. The Agreement must go through the EU process, which requires two resolutions to pass the Parliament, as well as domestic processes within each member state. Mr Millán Mon explained that although the Framework Agreement and the FTA were related politically, there was no technical or legal link between the two agreements.
- 2.14 The delegation discussed broad security threats for both countries. Mr Vajgl pointed out that geographic distance is no longer a protection against threats such as North Korea. Mass migration also brings security risks that require multi-faceted approaches. The delegation explained Australia's multicultural background and its current migration program, including the large humanitarian component. The meeting agreed that a bi-partisan, or multi-partisan, approach was required to address the complex problems of policy development in relation to terrorism and security.
- 2.15 The delegation explained Australia's maintenance of a close trading relationship with China, despite significant differences in political systems and values. The meeting discussed the importance of person-to-person links, and the need to maintain relationships while not compromising on core standards.

Meeting with President of the European Parliament

- 2.16 On 4 October 2017 the Speaker and Ms Clunies-Ross met with Antonio Tajani (Italy), the President of the European Parliament.
- 2.17 President Tajani was first elected to the European Parliament in 1994. He was elected as one of its Vice Presidents in 2014 and elected as President on 17 January 2017. The President welcomed the visit of an Australian parliamentary delegation to Strasbourg emphasising the importance of strong parliament to parliament dialogue and ties. He outlined some of the pressing issues facing Europe at this time, including Brexit, mass migration and the radicalisation of youth.
- 2.18 The Speaker discussed the importance of the recent signing of the EU Framework Agreement to Australia and that we look forward to support from EU member states to enable the launch of negotiations for an

comprehensive FTA with the EU. Australia and the EU face many of the same issues and share many common values, namely a liberal democratic heritage and a commitment to the rule of law, making us natural partners.

- 2.19 The Speaker dispelled the view that had been put to the delegation that Australia would not be willing to enter into negotiations on an FTA with the EU until it had secured one with Britain (post Brexit). The Speaker made it clear that while our ties with the UK are extremely close and long standing – Britain having been our first trading partner – Australia understands that the UK is unable to formally negotiate FTAs with third parties while it remains an EU member. Australia is committed to launching FTA negotiations with the EU, as scheduled.

Meeting with Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee

- 2.20 The delegation met with MEP David McAllister (Germany) the Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee. In the European Parliament there are 20 specialised standing committees that examine and report on legislative proposals. The Foreign Affairs Committee has 75 members and includes two subcommittees on Human Rights, and Security and Defence.
- 2.21 Mr McAllister explained to the Committee the complexities and issues surrounding the proposed Brexit, and warned the delegation against relying solely on British sources of information about the process. The delegation explained that despite Australia's historical links to Britain, Australia has a large population of European descent, and considers itself to have strong ties to many countries in Europe. Mr McAllister noted that approval rates for the EU have risen in all member countries since the decision.
- 2.22 Mr McAllister discussed foreign policy in the EU. Although most foreign policy is still largely undertaken by the member states individually, the EU is moving towards a more common approach. As a general rule, smaller countries are more in favour of the EU taking a common approach to foreign policy, while the bigger countries were generally more sceptical.
- 2.23 Mr McAllister advised that the current foreign policy priorities of the EU are:
- Russia, noting that on 19 June 2017 the EU extended the restrictive measures in response to the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol;
 - The southern border, particularly in relation to migration flows;

- Transatlantic relations, noting that historically the USA has always supported the EU as a mechanism to prevent wars that have affected North America; and
- The western Balkans, which has both a complex history and a number of current actors seeking to disrupt the path towards European integration.

2.24 The delegation discussed the current foreign policy and security priorities for Australia's region. The meeting discussed developments in the South China Sea, and explained our relationship with China that allows for both close trading partnerships and for Australia to demonstrate its commitment to the freedom of the seas.

2.25 The meeting also discussed North Korea, and the commitment to a diplomatic solution. Although geographically distant, Mr McAllister advised that the EU might be able to help negotiate a solution. The meeting agreed that all parties should appreciate the complexity of the situation and have realistic expectations as to possible outcomes.

Meeting with Secretary-General

2.26 The delegation met with Klaus Welle, the Parliament Secretary-General. The Secretary-General is the European Parliament's most senior official, heading Parliament's administration and ensuring the smooth running of plenary sittings. The Secretary-General also assists in preparing the meetings of the Conference of Presidents, and assisting the chairs of the political groups during their meetings.²

2.27 Mr Welle emphasised the importance of trade to the EU, and its commitment to an open global order. The delegation asked about his role in publicising the benefits of EU membership, and informing members of the public about the EU's work. Mr Welle advised that the European Parliament was working on simplifying its language, and tying EU achievements to the everyday reality of people's lives. Citizens of the EU would like the EU to be more involved in defence, security and counter-terrorism. The general view is that the EU has not delivered as well as it should on these big issues, but has over-delivered on smaller regulatory matters that are not as important to the general public.

2.28 Mr Welle also talked about the Brexit process, and whether the UK will be able to leave within its projected schedule. It appears that the UK wants a

² Responsibilities of the Secretary-General <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/the-secretary-general/en/responsibilities> accessed 16 October 2017.

special relationship with the EU that is different from the existing non-EU relationships; however the EU will want to ensure a balance of rights and duties before entering into any agreement.

- 2.29 Problematic areas with Brexit are the provision of hard borders into Northern Ireland, which Mr Welle believes risks undermining the peace process in Ireland. The EU was involved in negotiating this peace process and does not wish to see it jeopardised.

38th EU-Australia Inter-Parliamentary meeting

- 2.30 There have been regular parliamentary meetings between the Australian Parliament and the European Parliament since 1981. The European Parliament is represented by the Delegation for Relations with Australia and New Zealand (D-ANZ). The European Parliament currently has 44 standing delegations, each responsible for relationships with parliaments of non-EU countries, regions or organisations. The D-ANZ was founded in 1979 and has 12 members.³

First session

- 2.31 MEP Axel Voss (Germany), First Vice Chair of the Delegation, opened the meeting by re-iterating the strong historical and cultural ties between Europe and Australia. This is reinforced by a like-minded approach to a range of issues; for example working together on overseas development assistance in the South Pacific.
- 2.32 Attending this session with Mr Voss were D-ANZ members MEP Hannu Takkula (Finland), MEP Elzbieta Katarzyna Lukacijewska (Poland), MEP Luigi Morgano (Italy) and MEP Tom Vandenkendelaere (Belgium). Four members of the External Action Service—the European Union’s foreign service—were also present by teleconference from Belgium.

Update on Australia and EU economic and political situation

- 2.33 Mr Smith gave an update on Australia’s economic and political situation, noting that Europe was Australia’s largest source of foreign direct investment and Australia is pro-free trade. Mr Smith discussed the problems of terrorism, including the threat of returned fighters who had been fighting

³ Delegation for relations with Australia and New Zealand, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/danz/members> accessed 17 October 2017.

with terrorist organisations in the Middle East, and the number of failed terrorist attempts in Australia.

- 2.34 Mr Voss re-iterated the shared determination of Australia and Europe to support a secure world, closely governed by rules. Wages growth was also a challenge for Europe, and was closely linked to the need to ensure that all members of society share in the benefits of global trade.
- 2.35 Mr Morgano advised the delegation that, as a general principle, the project of European unity still stands strong. Results in recent elections in Europe support the principle that faith in the union remains, and the belief that the EU must act together to overcome major problems such as terrorism and climate change. However growth was needed for employment and job creation. Mr Morgano considered the cultural sector—including tourism—has been underestimated as an area for growth.

Figure 2.2 Inter-parliamentary meeting in progress



Delegation members listen to MEP Morgano (left) through simultaneous translation with officials via teleconference in Brussels

- 2.36 The meeting discussed the importance of stringent regulation and governance, particularly in relation to agriculture. Mr Takkula was also interested in Australia's education reforms resulting from the Gonski report, and educational outcomes for indigenous children.
- 2.37 Via teleconference from Brussels, the delegation heard from Mr Rheinhold Brender, Head of Division for Japan, Korea, Australia, New Zealand and Pacific in the European External Action Service. Mr Brender talked about the importance of the Framework Agreement to lift the relationship to a new strategic level, and give strategic direction to existing co-operation.

Global governance

- 2.38 The second item on the meeting agenda was global governance, particularly in relation to trade, climate change and terrorism. D-ANZ members emphasised the need to find a balanced solution that resulted in wins for both Australia and the EU. The meeting agreed that the two trading partners were similar in many respects and should be able to negotiate an FTA smoothly, noting the concerns of some European constituents in relation to Australia's agricultural products.
- 2.39 The meeting discussed other recent trade experiences, for example the impasse of the Trans-Pacific Partnership and Australia's recent FTA with China. The EU has recently concluded trade negotiations with Canada and Japan.
- 2.40 The delegations explained their relative positions on climate change, and the shared commitment to the Paris Agreement. The delegation advised that Australia has been investing heavily in renewable energy, but that high energy costs are a concern for Australian families and industry.

Second session

- 2.41 On 5 October 2017 the meeting re-convened for the second session, joined by an additional D-ANZ member, Mr Derek Vaughan (Wales).

Fight against terrorism

- 2.42 The meeting discussed methods to combat terrorism and the main challenges facing each party. One main challenge in the EU is that Member states are responsible for their own defence and intelligence. Using and sharing data is useful, but is constrained by protections aimed at preserving the privacy of individuals. The Australian delegation agreed that balancing

individual rights with the rights of the broader community is an ongoing issue.

- 2.43 The delegation outlined the steps Australia has taken to prevent terrorist attacks, including legislation about metadata and the ability for post-sentence or preventative detention. The meeting discussed methods for working with alienated youth to avoid radicalisation.

Brexit

- 2.44 Mr Vaughan outlined his view that the public perception of the EU, particularly in Wales, did not reflect the full range of the benefits of EU membership. The meeting discussed migration into the UK, which is approximately half from EU members and half from countries outside the EU (mostly Commonwealth countries). Mr Vaughan advised that significantly more money went into the UK economy from EU migrants than was taken out.
- 2.45 The meeting discussed the two main issues with Brexit; the single market and the single customs union. The latter concern is the main one for border control, to restrain goods coming in and out of the EU. It is not clear at this stage what form of trading relationship the UK would have with the EU.

Data protection and cyber security

- 2.46 Mr Voss discussed the European basic directive on data protection, which was adopted by the Parliament last year. Much of the directive relates to how data can be delivered to third countries. Again, it is a balancing act between protecting privacy and encouraging innovative use of data.
- 2.47 The meeting agreed that consent was not always a sensible mechanism to protect privacy, given the lack of attention paid by consumers to the terms and conditions. Consent was also no protection against those who seek to encrypt data for illegal or terrorist purposes.

Figure 2.3 Delegation and D-ANZ



The delegation with (l-r) MEP Morgano, MEP Lukacijewska, and MEP Voss (Vice-Chair)

Additional activities

- 2.48 Over the two days the delegation was shown the educational facilities of the purpose-built European Parliament building. The delegation was also shown the rooms designed for a role-play game for secondary school students and older, in which groups are given tasks and roles as MEPs. The game includes negotiating with other political parties, giving a press conference, drafting laws and speaking in plenary. Participants are issued with mobile phones that give updates, changes in policy positions and breaking news.
- 2.49 On 4 October the delegation was hosted by the European Parliament Vice President Mairead McGuinness (Ireland) for lunch in the Member's Restaurant. This lunch was attended by many of the MEPs that the delegation met over the two days in Strasbourg, and the delegation appreciated the opportunity to continue to discuss various topics.
- 2.50 On 4 October MEP Axel Voss hosted a dinner for the delegation at Maison Kammerzell, a restaurant in a building that dates back to 1427. The dinner

was attended by members of D-ANZ, including some who had not been able to attend the meetings during the day. The delegation appreciated this opportunity to meet new European colleagues in a relaxed and historical setting.

3. Brussels

- 3.1 The delegation travelled to Brussels, Belgium, from Strasbourg by high speed rail on Thursday 5 October 2017. The following morning, the delegation was briefed by two DFAT officials from the embassy in Brussels; Ms Helen Stylianou, Deputy Ambassador and Ms Phoebe Greentree, First Secretary Defence.

NATO

Meeting with Permanent Representatives

- 3.2 The delegation met with:
- Ambassador Sarah MacIntosh, the United Kingdom permanent representative to NATO
 - Ambassador Kay Bailey Hutchison, the USA permanent representative to NATO
 - Ambassador Kerry Buck, the Canada permanent representative to NATO.
- 3.3 Ms Buck discussed the special role of Canada as the nominated contact point for Australia at NATO. As the contact point, the Ambassador helps to represent Australia's interests at the NATO table and shares information with Australia. The relationship between the two countries is deep and longstanding, with close links at a range of levels in defence and intelligence.
- 3.4 Ms MacIntosh told the delegation that she was very pleased to see a bi-partisan parliamentary delegation, as it showed NATO that their partners had support at home for the NATO program. Ms MacIntosh outlined the current phase of NATO and the changes since its post-WWII roots. At the moment there are four main threats; state, non-state, technological change

and the undermining of the rules-based order. NATO is currently doing a major adaptation program—military, institutional and political—to address those threats.

- 3.5 Ms Bailey Hutchison agreed that the relationship with Australia was important to NATO, particularly to troops in the field who value Australians as well-trained and easy to work with. Ms Bailey Hutchison spoke about Australia’s role as an Enhanced Operational Partnership member.

Figure 3.1 NATO



The Speaker at the discussion with Ambassador MacIntosh, Ambassador Buck, and Ambassador Bailey Hutchison

- 3.6 The meeting discussed Australia’s ability to develop military technology, and the importance of an ongoing relationship with NATO. The delegation discussed Australia’s relationship to China, and the importance of both students and tourists in Australia to maintain person-to-person links. The NATO representatives expressed their appreciation of Australian analyses of Asia, which offers a different and valued perspective.

Meeting with Ambassador Ildem

- 3.7 The delegation met with Ambassador Tacan Ildem, the Assistant Secretary General of the Public Diplomacy division within NATO. Mr Ildem outlined the role of the Diplomacy division, which has a joint NATO and international staff.
- 3.8 The meeting discussed internal improvements in NATO, and the new headquarters building which will be operational in 2018. NATO members have pledged to spend 2 per cent of GDP on defence investment, with 20 per cent of that amount to be on new equipment in order to ensure the ongoing modernisation of the various defence forces.
- 3.9 Ambassador Ildem then hosted the delegation to lunch at NATO, where discussion continued about the future role of NATO and the contribution Australia might make to world security.

European Commission

- 3.10 The European Commission is the EU's politically independent executive arm. It proposes new legislation, and implements the decisions of the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union.

Meeting with Mr Katainen

- 3.11 The delegation met with Mr Jyrki Katainen, the European Commission Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment & Competitiveness. Mr Katainen informed the delegation about the rising prospects for jobs and growth within the EU, with positive indicators in member states after the divisions created by the global financial market. This has been reflected in an increased positive attitude towards the European Union as a whole, with leaders in member states more willing to actively support the EU.
- 3.12 The meeting discussed the shared commitment to free trade and creating modern global economies, and the opportunities for creating new markets for niche products in both Australia and the EU. Mr Katainen also outlined the process for negotiating and ratifying the FTA within the EU, which the delegation found very informative.

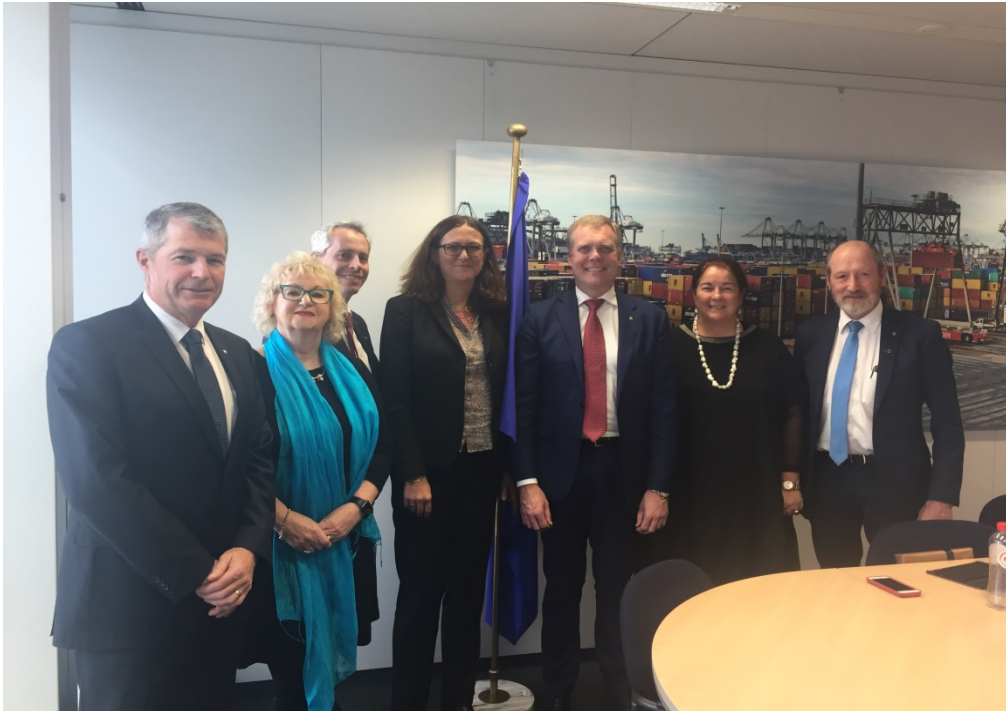
Meeting with Commissioner Malmström

- 3.13 The delegation then met with Ms Cecilia Malmström, the European Commissioner for Trade, and members of her staff. The meeting discussed the progress of the FTA between the EU and Australia, and agreed that it

was important to build a circle of friends who support the open global system.

- 3.14 The delegation emphasised Australia's commitment to smaller quantities of high quality produce, as well as the importance of services such as software. Innovative solutions that are traded between countries can encourage growth.

Figure 3.2 Meeting with Commissioner Malmström



Members of the delegation with Commissioner for Trade, Cecilia Malmström

- 3.15 Ms Malmström advised of current negotiations in the EU on trade agreements with Japan, Mexico and Mercosur. When those negotiations were complete, negotiations would begin with Australia and New Zealand; noting that the two agreements would be quite separate.
- 3.16 The meeting discussed public sensitivities on issues of globalisation and trade in both Australia and the EU. The meeting agreed that there is also some scepticism from the public that the claimed benefits of FTAs do not eventuate, or that the benefits are spread unevenly.

4. Ieper (Ypres)

Last Post

- 4.1 The delegation travelled by minibus from Brussels to Ieper (Ypres) on the evening of 6 October 2017. At 8.00 pm that evening, the Hon. Tony Smith MP read the Ode of Remembrance and laid a wreath at the Last Post ceremony at the Menin Gate in Ieper. This ceremony is conducted by a local organisation, and takes place every night as a tribute to those who died in the major offensives which occurred around Ieper from 1914-18.

Figure 4.1 Last Post ceremony



The Hon. Tony Smith MP laying a wreath at the Menin Gate

Battlefields visit

- 4.2 On the morning of 7 October 2017, the delegation visited several battlefields and memorials around Ieper. The delegation was accompanied by Major Andrew Coburn, Staff Officer Military Heritage in France and Belgium, Australian Army. The visits were greatly enhanced by Major Coburn's thorough knowledge of the area and the battles of WWI, and the delegation would like to thank him for his comprehensive and interesting explanations.

Menin Gate

- 4.3 The delegation visited the Menin Gate, in Ieper, which records the names of 54,000 allied soldiers who were killed in the area but who have no known

grave. The Menin Gate lions, which were donated to the Australian War Memorial from the mayor of Ieper in 1936, are currently on loan back to the town as part of the centenary commemorations, and stand in their old positions on either side of the gate.

Tyne Cot

- 4.4 The delegation visited the Tyne Cot Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery and Memorial to the Missing, the largest cemetery for Commonwealth forces in the world. Major Coburn explained the strategic significance of the area, which lies on a broad rise in the landscape, and showed the delegation the concrete shelters that were part of the German fortified position.

Figure 4.2 Tyne Cot



The delegation at the Tyne Cot cemetery

Polygon Wood

- 4.5 The battle of Polygon Wood in September 1917 was part of the third battle of Ypres, and resulted in 5,731 Australian casualties. The delegation visited the

Buttes New British Cemetery, which also includes a New Zealand Memorial to the Missing for 388 New Zealanders who were killed in the vicinity and who have no known grave. During the visit, the delegation was able to listen to the musical rehearsals of visiting New Zealand military forces, preparing for their centenary remembrance ceremonies to be held on 12 October 2017.

Mesen

- 4.6 The delegation then travelled to the New Zealand Memorial Messines, outside the town of Mesen, and adjacent to the Island of Ireland Peace Park. This memorial provides a good visual perspective of the landscape, and contains the remains of German pillboxes.

Mud Corner and Toronto Avenue Cemeteries

- 4.7 These cemeteries lie a short walk from the road through farmland and woodland. Mud Corner Cemetery was used from June to December 1917, and contains 84 graves. Toronto Avenue Cemetery is within the wood at Ploegsteert, and contains the graves of officers and men from 9th Brigade (3rd Australian Division) who died in the Battle of Messines between 7 and 10 June 1917.¹
- 4.8 The delegation was pleased to be able to place small wooden crosses with written messages from school children in Australia on the graves. The Australian War Memorial is running a Commemorative Crosses Program through the centenary of WWI, which captures students' reflections on Australians who have sacrificed their lives in war. Where possible, the delegation placed the crosses on graves that had a local connection with the children.

¹ Commonwealth War Graves Commission <https://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/9903/toronto-avenue-cemetery/> accessed 17 October 2017

5. Estonia

- 5.1 The delegation travelled from Belgium to Tallinn, Estonia on 7 October 2017. Estonia currently holds the presidency of the Council of the EU. The Council of the EU is the institution representing the member states' governments, where national ministers from each EU country meet to adopt laws and coordinate policies.
- 5.2 Presidency of the Council of the EU rotates among members every six months. During the presidency, the member state chairs meetings at every level in the Council. The Estonian Presidency states that its priorities are to focus on four key areas: an open and innovative European economy, a safe and secure Europe, digital Europe and free movement of data as well as an inclusive and sustainable Europe.¹
- 5.3 Australia has the sixth largest expatriate Estonian community in the world, and was one of the first countries to recognise Estonia's independence in 1991. Australia has had a Working Holiday Maker arrangement with Estonia since 2005, and a bilateral Social Security Agreement was signed in 2015.²
- 5.4 In Estonia, the delegation was accompanied by HE Jonathan Kenna, Australian Ambassador to Sweden with non-resident accreditation to Estonia, and Ms Susanna Fridlund, Public Diplomacy Officer at the Australian Embassy in Stockholm. The delegation would like to thank Ambassador Kenna for his very useful briefing prior to the program and meetings, and for hosting a dinner for the delegation on Sunday night.

¹ Council of the European Union, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/presidency-council-eu/> accessed 17 October 2017.

² Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Estonia Country Brief*, September 2017, p 2.

Sunday program

- 5.5 On Sunday 8 October 2017 the Estonian government organised a tour for the delegation from Tallinn to the Estonian National Museum in Tartu. The current museum was opened in 2016, although it is built close to the site of the original National Museum which was founded in 1909 on the grounds of the former Raadi Manor.
- 5.6 The current museum site is on a former Soviet airfield. The new building was chosen after an architectural competition, and is placed on the site of the old runway. The building expands along the path of the runway from ground level to a height of 15 metres at the large open entrance.
- 5.7 The delegation was given a guided tour of one of the permanent exhibitions, "Encounters". This exhibition looks at the past through people's experiences and day-to-day lives. The delegation greatly appreciated this opportunity to learn more about Estonia's complex and interesting past.
- 5.8 Also included in the day's program was a lunch at Põhjaka Manor, a manor house from 1820. The philosophy of the restaurant is to use only local Estonian produce, wherever possible from the garden and farm attached to the Manor.

Meeting with President Nestor

- 5.9 On Monday 9 October 2017 the delegation met with Mr Eiki Nestor, the President of the Riigikogu (the Estonian Parliament). Mr Nestor explained to the delegation aspects of the Estonian culture and its relationship to the EU, noting that Estonia had a very strong commitment to integration and high levels of support for the EU. Estonia is also a country that is very innovative, strongly connected to the internet and very interested in international partnerships and co-operation.
- 5.10 Mr Nestor showed the delegation the Session Hall of the Riigikogu, and explained the process for electronic voting in the Chamber. Electronic voting during elections was also discussed, with Mr Nestor explaining the concept of Estonian citizens having a single digital identity which is used for all interactions with government, including during elections. Estonians now have high expectations of the timeliness and accuracy of all their digital interactions with government. The delegation discussed privacy and security of data.

Figure 5.1 Signing the visitor's book



The Hon. Tony Smith MP signs the Visitors Book in the Riigikogu with President Nestor in the White Hall

Meeting with Vice-Chairman Pentus-Rosimannus

- 5.11 The delegation then met with Ms Keit Pentus-Rosimannus, Vice-Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee. This Committee is one of 11 standing committees in the Parliament, and has responsibility for foreign affairs and defence. The main focus of the committee currently is the security situation in the region. Estonia is aware that, as a smaller country, any changes in the international balance will affect its stability.
- 5.12 Ms Pentus-Rosimannus advised that NATO is very important for Estonia. The establishment of the NATO cyber centre of excellence in Tallinn is a significant vote of confidence in the country, and Ms Pentus-Rosimannus encouraged Australia to participate.
- 5.13 The meeting discussed trade relationships and the importance of open global trade. Ms Pentus-Rosimannus advised that, like Australia, Estonia is very committed to free trade with every sixth job directly created by

exporting. Estonia also has close business relationships with Britain, and is seeking a smooth Brexit transition for those citizens who live or work in both countries.

Meeting with Deputy Minister Maasikas

- 5.14 The delegation then met with Mr Matti Maasikas, the Deputy Minister for EU Affairs in the Estonian government. Mr Maasikas explained to the delegation the importance of the rotating Council presidency, which allows Estonia to advocate for the issues of free trade and globalisation that are important for it as a small exporting country. The delegation re-emphasised Australia's commitment to free trade, and the importance of like-minded countries working together.
- 5.15 The meeting discussed the challenges of mass migration throughout the world. Mr Maasikas talked about the 2015 migration crisis in Europe, which brought to light the shortcomings of the structure of the EU. However Mr Maasikas was confident that the EU could learn from these events and adapt for the future. One example is the new ability for a country to request assistance with border management from the EU.
- 5.16 The delegation asked about a future leadership role for other countries after the United Kingdom leaves the EU. In Mr Maasikas' view, the size of a country's trading power matters in the EU, leaving only a handful of options to take a leadership role from the UK. Although the migration crisis has unbalanced some relationships in the EU—particularly between east and west—he considers that EU solidarity will continue to grow.

Figure 5.2 Meeting with Deputy Minister Maasikas



The Hon. Tony Smith MP and Deputy Minister Matti Maasikas

Official lunch

- 5.17 Mr Eesmaa, the Vice President of the Riigikogu, hosted a lunch for the delegation. Also present were Ms Laine Randjarv, Vice-Chair of the Cultural Affairs Committee, Mr Mart Helme, Vice-Chairman of the National Defence Committee, and Mr Peep Jahilo, Secretary General of the Riigikogu.
- 5.18 The delegation was pleased to be able to meet parliamentary colleagues over lunch and would like to thank Mr Eesmaa for his hospitality.

Hon. Tony Smith MP
Speaker of the House of Representatives

A. Delegation program

Sunday 1 October

- Depart Australia

Monday 2 October

- Arrive Paris

Tuesday 3 October

- Travel from Paris to Strasbourg on high speed train
- Briefing from Ms Bellamy, DFAT
- Meeting with MEP Daniel Caspary, parliamentary rapporteur for the Australia-EU FTA, and shadow rapporteurs MEP Karoline Graswander-Hainz and MEP Anne-Marie Mineur
- Tour of the European Parliament by Protocol Service
- Meeting with MEP Francisco Millán Mon, parliamentary rapporteur for the EU-Australia Framework Agreement, and shadow rapporteurs MEP Ivo Vajgl and MEP Jaromir Kohlicek

Wednesday 4 October

- Briefing from Ms Bellamy, DFAT
- Meeting with Antonio Tajani, President of the European Parliament (the Hon. Tony Smith and Ms Clunies-Ross only)
- Meeting with MEP David McAllister, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee
- Meeting with Klaus Welle, Parliament Secretary-General
- Lunch hosted by European Parliament Vice President Mairead McGuinness
- Australia-EU Inter-parliamentary meeting – first session

- Dinner hosted by MEP Axel Voss, First Vice Chair of the Delegation for Relations with Australia and New Zealand

Thursday 5 October

- Briefing from Ms Bellamy, DFAT
- Australia-EU Inter-parliamentary meeting – second session
- Travel from Strasbourg to Brussels on high speed train

Friday 6 October

- Briefing from Ms Stylianou and Ms Greentree, DFAT
- Meeting with Jyrki Katainen, Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment & Competitiveness, European Commission
- Meeting with Ambassador Sarah MacIntosh, the United Kingdom permanent representative to NATO, Ambassador Kay Bailey Hutchison, the USA permanent representative to NATO and Ambassador Kerry Buck, the Canada permanent representative to NATO
- Meeting with Cecilia Malmström, European Commissioner for Trade, European Commission
- Travel from Brussels to Ieper by minibus
- Last Post ceremony at Menin Gate

Saturday 7 October

- Visit of battlefields and memorials: Menin Gate, Tyne Cot, Polygon Wood, Messines Ridge and Toronto Avenue Cemetery
- Travel to Lille by minibus
- Travel to Charles de Gaulle airport by high speed rail
- Travel to Tallinn, Estonia by air

Sunday 8 October

- Travel to Tartu to visit the Estonian National Museum
- Lunch hosted by Estonian government at Pohljaka Manor
- Walking tour of Tallinn Old Town
- Dinner hosted by HE Kenna, Australia's Ambassador to Sweden

Monday 9 October

- Briefing by HE Kenna and Ms Fridlund, DFAT
- Meeting with Mr Eiki Nestor, President of the Riigikogu
- Meeting with Ms Keit Pentus-Rosimannus, Vice-Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee
- Meeting with Mr Matti Maasikas, Deputy Minister for EU Affairs
- Lunch hosted by Mr Enn Eesmaa, Vice-President of the Riigikogu

- Departure for airport and travel back to Australia

Wednesday 11 October

- Return to Australia