



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Official Committee Hansard

**HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES**

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS

**Reference: Petitions presented up to 19 March 2009**

WEDNESDAY, 27 MAY 2009

CANBERRA

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



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**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**STANDING COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS**

**Wednesday, 27 May 2009**

**Members:** Mrs Irwin (*Chair*), Mr Broadbent (*Deputy Chair*), Mr Adams, Mr Chester, Ms George, Mr Hawke, Mr Neumann, Mr Simpkins, Mr Craig Thomson and Ms Vamvakinou

**Members in attendance:** Mr Adams, Mr Broadbent, Mr Chester, Ms George, Mrs Irwin, Mr Simpkins, Mr Craig Thomson, Ms Vamvakinou

**Terms of reference for the inquiry:**

To inquire into and report on:

Petitions presented up to 19 March 2009

**WITNESSES**

<b>ADLER, Dr Ruth, Assistant Secretary, Environment Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>BURKE, Mr Paul, Manager, Board and Shareholder Liaison, Australia Post .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>CHOI, Mr James, Assistant Secretary, Consular Operations Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>DUTTON, Dr David, Director, Marine Environment Section, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>FAULKNER, Ms Andrea, Assistant Secretary, Middle East and Africa Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>FRENCH, Dr Greg, Assistant Secretary, International Legal Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HAWKINS, Mr Neil, Assistant Secretary, Afghanistan and Iraq Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HOLLY, Mr David, Assistant Secretary, South and West Asia Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>McCORMICK, Mr Gordon, General Manager, Community Infrastructure Program, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>MILLETT, Mr Michael, Director, Communications, Australian Broadcasting Corporation.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>PELLING, Dr Simon, First Assistant Secretary, Broadcasting and Content Division, Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>RITTER, Ms Jonquil Olivia, Executive Manager, National Licensing and Allocations Branch, Australian Communications and Media Authority .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>RIZVI, Mr Abul, Deputy Secretary, Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>STARR, Ms Clare Maree, Director, Western Australia and South Australia Network Roads, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>TRAPPETT, Mr Doug, Director, Thailand and Philippines Section, South East Asia Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>WHITE, Ms Heather, Director, Queensland and Northern Territory Network Roads, Nation Building—Infrastructure Investment Division, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>WILLIAMS, Mr Matthew, Director, Policy Coordination, AusAID .....</b>	<b>14</b>



**Committee met at 10.17 am**

**CHAIR (Mrs Irwin)**—Good morning. I now declare open this public hearing of the Standing Committee on Petitions and welcome everyone in attendance. Under the House standing orders the committee is able to examine matters relating to petitions and, as a way of complementing the ministerial response process, the committee has decided to conduct public hearings on issues raised in petitions.

Today the committee has invited three departments to provide advice on issues raised by petitioners so that petitioners, of most petitions, are able to have the benefit of expert advice from the relevant department or departments. This morning we welcome representatives of the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy; the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government; and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

The transcript of what is said today will be posted on the committee's website. If you would like further details about the meeting or the transcript please ask any of the committee staff here at the hearing. The hearing is open to the public.

I now invite representatives from the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy and others to the table.

[10.18 am]

**MILLETT, Mr Michael, Director, Communications, Australian Broadcasting Corporation**

**RITTER, Ms Jonquil Olivia, Executive Manager, National Licensing and Allocations Branch, Australian Communications and Media Authority**

**BURKE, Mr Paul, Manager, Board and Shareholder Liaison, Australia Post**

**PELLING, Dr Simon, First Assistant Secretary, Broadcasting and Content Division, Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**RIZVI, Mr Abul, Deputy Secretary, Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**CHAIR**—Welcome. Although the committee does not require you to speak under oath you should understand that this meeting is a formal proceeding of the parliament. Giving false or misleading evidence is a serious matter and may be regarded as a contempt of the parliament.

I will start the questions. I want to refer to a petition regarding Goldfields Community Radio in Bendigo. We have got a response here from Minister Conroy dated 22 December. Given the response was written in December—I know a lot could have happened between then and now—can the department provide a comment as to the progress on the relocation of a spectrum, a time frame, and the results of the consultative process, both of which are mentioned on page 2 of the minister's response?

**Dr Pelling**—Yes. I will pass over to my colleague from ACMA in a moment, but my understanding is that there has been consideration given and consultation with the broadcasters regarding the provision of low-power frequencies to the two community broadcasters Fresh FM—that is the Pulse, I think—and Phoenix FM. They currently time share, as you know, one frequency. The proposal originally proposed by ACMA was to have all three of them share a different frequency with a third temporary community broadcasting service, which is the Central Victorian Gospel Radio. Since that time the communications authority has identified two additional frequencies in the FM band which could be suitable for community broadcasting, and it is now consulting with the broadcasters as to whether they would be prepared to move to those, which would, as I understand it, result in all three of the temporary community broadcasters in that area having their own frequency as well as the ABC service having their own high frequency.

**CHAIR**—When do you hope that consulting process will be completed or when might we have some indication of the outcome?

**Ms Ritter**—We have completed that initial consultation. Initially only Phoenix FM has expressed a real interest in the lower power frequencies. The other two broadcasters, Fresh FM and Gospel Radio are, quite understandably, more enthusiastic about the higher power frequency. As you will appreciate, they are temporary broadcasters and they have been on notice that they

have no tenure on any frequency at all, so we certainly think that when they get a chance to compete for whatever frequencies there are, they are likely to put up their hand for the higher power and also, as a possible consolation, the lower power.

Where that is at is that we will be taking that option of making those lower power frequencies, which are 105.1 and 101.67 MHz, go to the authority to get their agreement to go ahead with an amendment to the draft variation, which under the Broadcasting Services Act we are required to consult widely on. Assuming that goes ahead, we would get further submissions on that. We would then go back to the authority with the overall position in terms of the community views that we have received and also the minister's intended desire for the PNN to be available in the Bendigo area and move forward with a LAP variation according to the authority's decision on that issue.

After that they would share frequencies until we would then move quite quickly to allocate the long-term frequency—the long-term licences for whatever frequencies are available for community—so that they could get some certainty moving forward as to which one would be allocated the long term and which ones might be allocated the lower power. That process is done on merit so that the best community group, according to the criteria in the act, would get the high-power frequency.

**CHAIR**—Fine. Have any other members of the committee got any further questions on this particular petition?

**Ms GEORGE**—I notice in the minister's reply to the petition that it stated:

I would also note that the Government considers that the extension of the ABC's NewsRadio service to large centres such as Bendigo is important ...

I concur with that assessment. I would point out, though, that Wollongong is the ninth largest city in Australia and the short-term extension of NewsRadio in our region was done at the expense of denying people access to Radio National, so it was like robbing Peter to pay Paul.

**CHAIR**—Jennie, I am sorry to interrupt. We have actually really got to concentrate on the petitions that are before us today and the response from the minister. We are here virtually asking questions on behalf of the principal petitioner on a particular petition that has been tabled in the House.

**Ms GEORGE**—It is in relation to the minister's reply that the government considers the extension to large centres is important, so I guess I am asking: you have done it in Bendigo; is it going to be done in other centres that are larger than Bendigo?

**Mr Millett**—We can take that on board and work out where we are up to with the rollout of ABC NewsRadio and what is planned for your area.

**CHAIR**—So you could take that on notice for Ms George and get back to us.

**Mr Millett**—Sure.

**CHAIR**—Thank you. Are there any further questions on that petition?

**Mr ADAMS**—The issue is of digital radio becoming the reality into the future. I take it these are the temporary licences until digital radio comes through.

**Dr Pelling**—This is a different matter. This is about extension of analog NewsRadio services.

**Mr ADAMS**—Extending analog?

**Dr Pelling**—Yes. The program was initially started by the previous government, and funding was confirmed by this government. It is a proposal in several stages to do a fairly significant extension of the NewsRadio service via the ABC. But it is an analog service. Digital radio is a separate activity. It is likely that digital radio services by ABC and SBS and the commercial broadcasters will start in the five state capital cities about the beginning of July, I think, on the current schedule. But there are at this stage ongoing discussions with the industry about proposals to extend digital radio services into the regions. But there are a range of technical considerations which would have still to be worked through.

**Mr ADAMS**—It is a shame there are only five capitals.

**CHAIR**—As we have got a number of other petitions in front of us and we have only got the department for half an hour, I think we will go now to a petition regarding the relocation of the Wanneroo post office. We have a ministerial response, as you would be aware, dated 11 February. The minister has stated:

Australia Post has further advised that, in consultation with the building's owner, a refurbishment and upgrade is planned for completion this financial year.

Can you give the committee an update on the consultations with the building owner regarding the refurbishment and upgrade?

**Mr Burke**—That refurbishment has taken place. It was completed at the end of February this year. It incorporated an upgrade to the current standard Australia Post retail fit-outs. Access to the outlet has been improved considerably. A disabled parking bay at the front of the outlet has been widened and extended to provide easier access as well. Feedback from our customers has been positive. The office is fresh, bright and uncluttered and we are not aware of any negative feedback with regard to the disability access.

**CHAIR**—That is quite good. I think that was mainly the concern of the petitioners, where they stated that the car parking was poor and the disabled access was poor. So that is good news and it is good feedback to know that people are now happy about the situation there. Has anyone got any further questions on the petition regarding Wanneroo post office?

**Mr ADAMS**—I think this has been where a petition has achieved something for the petitioners. It has brought discussion and improved especially the disability access to the post office. I think that is a positive and it is a positive for Australia Post to have responded in such a positive way. I congratulate you on that.

**Mr Burke**—Thank you.

**CHAIR**—Wonderful. I want to go now to a petition—to which there was a response from the minister on 21 October—regarding mobile phone coverage at Walker Flat. The minister stated:

Telstra's online coverage maps indicate that mobile phone coverage is available throughout the Walker Flat district. However, an external antenna may be required to obtain a signal in some areas, including in the township itself.

He went on to say:

Telstra has advised that, within recent months, the transmission towers in the area have been revisited and some adjustment was done. Telstra also advised that they had received feedback indicating that coverage had improved.

This petition came to the petitions committee and was tabled by Mr Secker, who stated that he received 489 signatures on this particular petition, so I think every adult in Walker Flat signed it! How much has coverage really improved? Is it at 50, 60, 70, 80, 90 per cent or are you going to tell me it has been fantastic and they have got 100 per cent now?

**Mr Rizvi**—We have some good news for the residents of Walker Flat.

**CHAIR**—More good news for the principal petitioner!

**Mr Rizvi**—I will pass the committee a few maps of the Walker Flat area.

**CHAIR**—This is a good news day today!

**Mr Rizvi**—There is some good news here. As you can see, the grey parts of the map highlight where mobile coverage is currently available, and there are difficulties with coverage—as shown by the little white spaces—near the river, particularly where there are high cliffs or things that might interfere with the mobile coverage, and that is where the difficulties have arisen. But there has been some good news, in that Telstra has decided and recently announced that they will be placing a new mobile phone tower very near Walker Flat that will address the black spots in that particular area, just near the river or very close to the community, so that the black spots that the community previously had will be addressed. They have indicated that the tower will be built by July this year.

**CHAIR**—By July 2009? That is wonderful news for the 489 people who signed the petition who all live in Walker Flat.

**Mr CHESTER**—There are a lot of regional communities who obviously have a similar situation to the residents of Walker Flat. Is the decision to put a tower in there purely a commercial decision driven by Telstra, or is there a black spots program at the moment to assist that type of investment? Is there a government funded program at the moment to assist with black spots?

**Mr Rizvi**—No, that was a commercial decision by Telstra to respond to the representations they had received. At present, the government does not have a specific black spots program for mobile coverage.

**Mr CHESTER**—In relation to this petition—and I know that I, as a regional MP, get quite a few representations from people as a matter of course; on a daily basis, almost—and the process of people petitioning: does that put it on your map or on Telstra’s map as an issue? How is it received within the department when you are alerted to a black spot? Are you already aware of that black spot, or does it tend to bring your attention to it more?

**Mr Rizvi**—It highlights it and draws our attention to it. What we then do is to contact the relevant carriers—Optus, Telstra or Vodafone—and draw their attention to it. At the end of the day, however, it is a commercial decision of the carriers.

**Mr CHESTER**—But it is a reasonable course of action by the petitioners or by the residents to start a petition and draw attention to their plight?

**Mr Rizvi**—I think it helps to draw attention to the issue and it focuses the attention of the carriers.

**Mr CHESTER**—I appreciate that. Thank you.

**Mr ADAMS**—As to the economic decision to do this, was it 109 people who petitioned—did I hear correctly?

**Mr Rizvi**—No, it was 489 people.

**Mr ADAMS**—That is a substantial number of people. So is there anything in the economic and business model to say when the new tower will be paid off or how long that will take? One gets into these discussions, as my colleague has just said, with some of the carriers about who is going to do the hard ones and who is not. I understand economics so I understand the economic needs. The switching off of CDMA and going to digital was probably what started this, and there are a few areas that have that difficulty.

**Mr Rizvi**—I cannot talk specifically about the economics of it or the commercial decisions that are made by the individual carriers, but I can perhaps highlight a few of the factors they take into account.

The first factor is the building of the tower itself. Most of the carriers tell us that the cost of a single tower is in the vicinity of \$400,000, plus or minus, depending on the location and the difficulty of the terrain.

The second dimension is how far the location of that tower will be from the back haul, so getting back to the base. If it is a long distance then that really does ramp up the costs quite considerably. The cost per kilometre of building that back haul is quite substantial.

The third factor that they will take into account is the population in the area and the passing population and what kind of revenue that will generate. They will compare that to their ongoing costs, maintenance et cetera, and weigh that up. If that comes to a positive commercial outcome then they will proceed to build.

**Mr ADAMS**—I would just like to ask one more question, because of digital TV in the future, about education and understanding that there are black spots and areas. We just put signals out there and they do not just float—there are gullies, valleys, hills, trees and many things. Information is always difficult. People do not really understand how coverage works. Is there any opportunity of lifting that knowledge base in the general public at all?

**CHAIR**—Is your question regarding coverage overall?

**Mr ADAMS**—Yes. A lot of people have achieved their result here, but I am thinking about information for the general public.

**Mr Rizvi**—My understanding is that, as part of the digital switch-over program, there will be a very substantial awareness campaign that will be run by the government. Through that, we are hopeful that people will get a much better understanding of both what they need to get a reception and what issues there might be in terms of signals in their particular area. The government will be looking at options to deal with black spot issues within a digital context.

**CHAIR**—I want to go to a petition that has been tabled in the House and to a reply from the minister—it was received on 13 April—concerning funding for the Special Broadcasting Service, SBS. The minister's response refers to the triennial funding review for SBS. Can the department provide more information with regard to the timetable for this funding review and was the triennial funding submission for 2009 supported by the government, as requested by petitioners in the petition?

**Dr Pelling**—The triennial funding review was done in the budget context, so it provided input into the government's decision in the budget for funding for both the ABC and the SBS for the next triennium, which is starting at the beginning of the next financial year, so that is next year and the two following years. In that decision the government announced it would provide new funding for the ABC, totalling \$20 million over the triennium. That is, \$4 million in 2009-10; \$5 million in 2010-2011; and \$11 million in 2011-2012. That would obviously be ongoing in terms of the base for the ABC, subject to a review at the end of the next triennium, which is the normal process. So each three years they go through a triennial funding review process. That will mean, as published in the portfolio budget statements, that SBS will receive government funding in excess of \$631 million in total over the forthcoming triennium.

**CHAIR**—Has any member got a further question on this petition? No. Mr Simpkins wants to ask a question on a petition that was presented on sexual advertising and access to internet pornography. We have received a response from the minister today. Before passing on to Mr Simpkins, I should say I have not had a chance to fully read the letter, but what monitoring exists with regard to sexual advertising within the media, radio, television and the internet? What sort of monitoring do you do?

**Dr Pelling**—The regulation of advertising is generally at two levels. Firstly, there is a level of self-regulation in the industry itself, so there are a number of advertising codes relating to different aspects of advertising, which is handled by the Advertising Standards Bureau's Advertising Standards Board. The standards bureau is responsible for the process and there is a complaints process directly to the industry-organised authority, which does not have any direct regulatory status but they take the issue of advertising very seriously. They have codes in place

which deal with a range of matters, ranging from the process for adult material and adverts for alcohol and all sorts of things relating to advertising. At the first level there is a self-regulatory structure set up by the advertising industry.

The second level of regulation with regard to advertising is put in place by the codes of practice developed by the television industry and also the radio industry. Those codes of practice set down a series of rules about how advertising is handled, when particular types of adverts can be shown on the television and on the classification of those adverts. I do not have the codes in front of me, but basically there are a series of rules about, for example, when adult material can be shown. It is restricted to certain times of the day. Material which is classified over a certain level—MA 15 +—is not allowed to be shown on television and so on. There is both a level of regulation at the advertising industry level, who are responsible for their own content, and a level of regulation at the broadcasting industry level about when that content can be shown in the form of ads and how it is classified under the broadcasting rules.

**Mr SIMPKINS**—This matter came into sharp focus on a number of occasions last year when I reported—and I have heard plenty of other people have reported this stuff as well—people who do the nasal delivery male dysfunction product ads during the day. The classic example was where they advertised one of these sorts of ads on one day and the next ad, which was over in Perth, was for free entry for kids to the royal show. It is just outrageous. The advertising standards people had a chance to fix this up, to be more specific about it and they have not done so. What more can be done?

**Dr Pelling**—There are complaints processes at both the advertising standards level, which, as far as I am aware, they take quite seriously, but then there are also regulated complaints processes under the codes of practice. So if there are complaints about the types of material shown on commercial television then a person can, first, make a complaint to the broadcaster. The broadcaster has, I think, 30 days to respond. If the complainant is not satisfied with the broadcaster's response then the complainant can take that matter to the Australian Communications and Media Authority and the authority then has the capacity to investigate and to take action against the broadcasters, if necessary. Indeed, they have taken action against broadcasters on a range of aspects of television, both in commercial broadcasting and in other areas of broadcasting, in response to complaints. So there are mechanisms available. There is a set of rules which govern the types of programs you see on television, including the types of advertisements, and there are processes in place whereby the public can make complaints to deal with those matters. If your constituents or you are concerned about the programs that you see on television and about the times you see those programs then the process available to you is to go through the formal complaints process—firstly, to the broadcaster and, if that does not satisfy you, to ramp it up to the Australian Communications and Media Authority. They have a range of powers to deal with these things.

**Mr SIMPKINS**—Just in regard to—

**CHAIR**—Sorry to interrupt, but if it could be a quick question. We only have the room until quarter to 12, and we have two other departments to hear from. So one quick question from Mr Simpkins; I know Mr Chester wants one as well.

**Mr SIMPKINS**—No, it is all right; I will pass.

**CHAIR**—Mr Chester.

**Mr CHESTER**—I do not want to be shooting the messenger but I do have some grave concerns about how this self-regulation is working at the moment. It seems to me that there is a lot of matter of opinion involved and that as society's values may change then I am not sure how the minister's depiction here of how the codes of practice are being applied in practice is working. My concern relates to the screening of commercials for M-rated programs during G-rated programs. The networks will promote a show that is coming up at 9.30 that night during the local rugby league or football match. I have personally made complaints along those lines, and having gone through the process I can see why the residents just will not go through it. It was a very unsatisfactory process and basically just came back as a matter of opinion. I just flag that there is an issue out there amongst residents. If they have got their children watching a G-rated program, they do not expect them to see a promotion for *CSI: Miami* or whatever else. Without picking on that particular show, there is an issue out there that is building in the community. I just alert you to it rather than seek your response. I think the industry has a problem.

**Dr Pelling**—One final quick comment from me is that there is a process underway at the moment whereby the code of practice for commercial radio and television broadcasters is being reviewed. That happens periodically. The authority is in the middle of that process at the moment. I do not have to hand precisely the timeframes of that process but there may be an opportunity for those comments to be made in that context.

**Mr CHESTER**—I would not be surprised if this was quite a widely held view amongst parents. It is coming through more often through my office anyway just in comments, but there is no real groundswell at the moment. But I am picking it up.

**CHAIR**—I would like to thank the department for coming before us today and giving us some good news for some of the petitioners. Regarding the petition that we had just been discussing, the sexual advertising and access to internet pornography, we might revisit that at a later date when you come before us. Thank you again.

[10.47 am]

**McCORMICK, Mr Gordon, General Manager, Community Infrastructure Program, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government**

**STARR, Ms Clare Maree, Director, Western Australia and South Australia Network Roads, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government**

**WHITE, Ms Heather, Director, Queensland and Northern Territory Network Roads, Nation Building—Infrastructure Investment Division, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government**

**CHAIR**—Welcome to the representatives from the department. Although the committee does not require you to speak on oath, you should understand that this meeting is a formal proceeding of the parliament. Giving false or misleading evidence is a serious matter and may be regarded as contempt of the parliament.

I want to go to a petition that was tabled in the House regarding the relocation of East Gippsland TAFE and the development of a multi-sports complex. The committee notes that the petition does not present any detail of the proposal or the funding request for the relocation of the Gippsland TAFE and the possible establishment of a new multi-sports complex. Is the department able to offer any advice through the committee to the petitioners as to what the proposal might be or how funding has been requested?

**Mr McCormick**—Yes, I can confirm that the application by the Wellington Shire Council for the relocation and the sports development has been successful under the Community Infrastructure Program strategic projects program and negotiations are currently underway with the council. They have had a funding offer of \$3.25 million from the federal government, with an expectation of partnership funding from the state government as well as a contribution from the council.

**CHAIR**—I might pass over to Mr Chester because I know that he is very, very interested in this petition.

**Mr CHESTER**—There is not too much more to report than what Gordon has already mentioned. It was a very strong community campaign to raise the issue. Minister Ferguson was in Gippsland a matter of weeks ago to announce the funding, and it has been very well received in the community. The pressure now rests with the shire to meet the very tight deadlines and to encourage the state government to come to the party. But I think there is a good feeling in the community that this project will progress quite quickly from now on. I think the petitioners will be very pleased with their work.

**CHAIR**—That is good to hear. I am sure that the petitioners will be happy to hear the advice that we have just received. I gather there are no further questions on the East Gippsland TAFE

and development. We will go to another petition, regarding Waterfall Gully Road in South Australia. It was 6 April, and the minister stated:

Waterfall Gully Road is a state arterial road and, as such, the responsibility for the development and upgrade of this road lies with the South Australian Government. I have, therefore, forwarded a copy of your correspondence to the South Australian Minister for Transport, the Hon Patrick Conlon MP for his consideration.

I do not think we have received a response from the South Australian minister. The petition asked the House to encourage the South Australian government to ensure that Waterfall Gully Road is repaired immediately. Clare, can you advise the committee and the principal petitioner how state and territory funds are allocated for road projects?

**Ms Starr**—I look after network roads, as I indicated. I can speak very broadly. There are several streams of funding, I guess you would say. The main stream that I look after—and that is the one I can speak about—is for network roads. The majority of the projects that have been funded on network roads were announced during the 2007 election. They were very much a matter for the government, having regard to input from the states, of course. As far as the funding streams are concerned, I do not have an intimate knowledge of the processes that the petitioners could go through, but there are examples—for instance, the Black Spot Program—that are always open to them to apply to.

**CHAIR**—Does anyone want to ask a further question on this petition that is before us?

**Mr SIMPKINS**—Surely the Black Spot Program would not apply for a whole road. I have only ever seen it applied at intersections and things like that.

**Ms Starr**—Again, I do not have an intimate knowledge of the Black Spot Program, but for a whole road I do not know the magnitude of the upgrade and the cost. Of course, the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure in South Australia probably has a better idea of that because it is under its responsibility. But the major funding for roads, such as for major \$10 million and \$20 million upgrades—I am just talking off the top of my head—was announced during the 2007 election.

**CHAIR**—Are there any further questions on this petition? As there are not, we will go now to a petition on the Toowoomba bypass. The petition was strongly supported by the local council, who I understand placed advertisements in local newspapers which showed the petition terms so that people could actually cut out the petition and sign it, and then they collected a lot of signatures. Actually they collected 26,602 signatures. Is the department able to provide a comment or update on the matters raised in the petition? For example, is the request technically possible that funding be committed from the Building Australia Fund for construction of the bypass?

**Ms White**—The Toowoomba bypass was one of the projects put forward by the state government as part of the Infrastructure Australia assessment process for funding out of the BAF, the Building Australia Fund. It was on the interim list of 94 projects which was released by IA in December 2008. The successful projects that were to be funded were announced in the 2009 budget and the Toowoomba bypass project was not awarded any funds.

**Mr ADAMS**—Could it be rightly said that this has been on the agenda for an awfully long time? There is a tunnel proposition. Is this a part of that?

**Ms White**—Yes, there was a study commissioned in 2006, I think. I will check the date for you.

**CHAIR**—You might take that on notice.

**Ms White**—Yes, I will take that on notice. It was to see if the proposed range crossing—it was only proposed—would be viable as a PPP, a public-private partnership. That study indicated that it was not viable to be funded as a PPP. In other words, the commercial proponents would not be of any great interest in having that and the initial cost for government would be quite exorbitant. The study was released on 1 May and is available on the department's website.

**Mr ADAMS**—So the economics on this is a bit tricky.

**Ms White**—Yes.

**Mr CHESTER**—Given that they have missed out on this current round, what is the process going forward? When will they be likely to be reconsidered in the future? Is there a time frame of rolling funding?

**Ms White**—I am not aware, and that is a decision for government.

**Mr CHESTER**—So there is not another program and they will be considered in the next 12 months or something?

**Ms White**—Not that I am aware of.

**Mr CHESTER**—That is it for now?

**Ms White**—Yes.

**Mr BROADBENT**—Is there a heavy truck route around Toowoomba?

**Ms White**—Heavy vehicles follow the main road through.

**Mr BROADBENT**—You do not actually drive into the township?

**Ms White**—They go through the centre of town.

**Mr BROADBENT**—I thought you went up the side of the township.

**Ms White**—No. I will just try to find the actual route.

**Mr BROADBENT**—The truck route goes through an industrial area.

**Ms White**—I would have to take it on notice to give you that information.

**Mr BROADBENT**—I might have the wrong town, mightn't I!

**Ms White**—There are three main streets that form the route through the town before it then goes down the range.

**Mr CHESTER**—In terms of the state government's priorities, was this high on their priorities? It was on their list, I take it. Did they give a batting order for you?

**Ms White**—I am not aware of any batting order, but they did put it forward as part of the state's submission to Infrastructure Australia.

**Mr ADAMS**—Did the federal minister make any representation during his last 12 years in government?

**Mr CHESTER**—Is that a question, Mr Adams?

**Mr ADAMS**—No, it was a statement.

**CHAIR**—There are no further questions?

**Ms Starr**—I would like to make a minor correction to the title of the program in paragraph 3 of the letter. It is actually the nation building program 2008-09 to 2013-14.

**CHAIR**—That is in the ministerial response? Could you please repeat that.

**Ms Starr**—Yes. It is just a minor correction of title, really. The government's nation building program is from 2008-09 to 2013-14, just so the record is correct.

**Ms White**—I did take on notice the date the study was conducted. I can provide that now if I may be allowed.

**CHAIR**—It would be appreciated.

**Ms White**—It was between 2006 and 2008, with the draft study outcome being provided in about late 2008. As I said, it was published on the department's website on 1 May.

**CHAIR**—Thank you very much. Thank you for appearing before the committee today. We only had the three petitions. Thank you for your responses. I am sure that the principal petitioners will be looking forward to reading our website.

[11.06 am]

**ADLER, Dr Ruth, Assistant Secretary, Environment Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

**CHOI, Mr James, Assistant Secretary, Consular Operations Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

**DUTTON, Dr David, Director, Marine Environment Section, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

**FAULKNER, Ms Andrea, Assistant Secretary, Middle East and Africa Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

**FRENCH, Dr Greg, Assistant Secretary, International Legal Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

**HAWKINS, Mr Neil, Assistant Secretary, Afghanistan and Iraq Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

**HOLLY, Mr David, Assistant Secretary, South and West Asia Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

**TRAPPETT, Mr Doug, Director, Thailand and Philippines Section, South East Asia Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

**WILLIAMS, Mr Matthew, Director, Policy Coordination, AusAID**

**CHAIR**—Welcome. Although the committee does not require you to speak under oath, you should understand that this meeting is a formal proceedings of the parliament. Giving false or misleading evidence is a serious matter and may be regarded as a contempt of the parliament.

We have a number of petitions before us today, as you would be aware. We might take each one and other members can follow on with questions. I want to go to a petition about the murder of an Australian citizen, Mr Renerio Arrogante, in the Philippines. The response from the minister is dated 10 October. Is the department able to provide any further advice to the principal petitioner and petitioners with regard to the investigation of Mr Arrogante's murder? Have there been any developments on which the department is able to comment?

**Mr Choi**—Certainly. Our embassy in Manila has been monitoring the case very closely. Just as a start, given that this is a criminal investigation in the Philippines, we have no ability to intervene or to influence proceedings, just as we would not appreciate other countries commenting on our own judicial processes. But our embassy has been monitoring developments very closely.

As soon as we had heard about the murder, on 28 March 2008 our embassy had written to the Philippines National Bureau of Investigation seeking an update on the progress of investigations. We have continued to monitor developments in the case. Most recently our embassy wrote to the National Bureau of Investigation again on 15 May 2009 seeking an update. We understand that the alleged gunman behind the incident has been arrested. The trial has not yet proceeded. The Arrogante family has requested of Philippines authorities that the case be transferred to Cebu City courts. At the moment it is being considered in Bogo City courts. As a result of that petition, I understand that petition is being considered but the trial has not yet proceeded.

**CHAIR**—Because of the family's request to have it transferred?

**Mr Choi**—To Cebu City jurisdiction.

**CHAIR**—Is there any indication of when that might be decided or heard?

**Mr Choi**—No, we do not know at this stage. I understand that there are two separate proceedings. One is the criminal prosecution and, as I said, the family's petition is being considered by the Philippines authorities. A separate and civil case on the charges of illegal firearms is being considered. That initial hearing is being heard on 1 July 2009.

**CHAIR**—Could you advise the petitioners what sort of support you are giving the family in keeping them up to date?

**Mr Choi**—Yes. Obviously that is part of our consular role. We have attempted to contact the family both in the Philippines but also here in Australia. We tried to contact the next of kin here in Australia on 22 January, providing a letter updating our efforts to provide further details on the case. We have written to Mrs Arrogante via family contact but she has not returned our correspondence. Likewise, our embassy in Manilla has been trying to contact the family to provide them with updates but they have not responded. So we stand ready to provide assistance and we have offered that, to provide them with updates, but they have not returned our correspondence.

**CHAIR**—Are there any further questions on this petition? Mr Adams.

**Mr ADAMS**—Have you made physical contact with this woman? She may not read English, she may not—

**Mr Choi**—The family has called in to consular operations. We have followed up but they have not responded. We have made extensive efforts and they know that we stand ready to provide consular assistance as required.

**Mr ADAMS**—Has there been much improvement in the Philippines human rights record? Where do they sit on the measuring stick these days?

**Mr Choi**—Sorry, I do not think I am in a position to respond to that because I work on consular operations. I work on the individual cases as opposed to the political situation in the Philippines.

**Mr ADAMS**—Is there anybody with an overview?

**Mr Trappett**—I could comment on that. I take it more than anything you are referring to extrajudicial killings in the Philippines.

**Mr ADAMS**—In my motivation, I went there many years ago and it was on the agenda then when they went to a more democratic process. They had a commission for human rights; they really worked at it. I was just wondering where it got to.

**Mr Trappett**—From around about 2001 to 2006 extrajudicial killings in the Philippines were very prominent and attracted the attention of the international community, including Australia. Since late 2006 they have declined considerably. I think it is fair to say that that is acknowledged by the international community and human rights groups as well. There are still some instances of egregious acts. There is a lot of dispute about the overall statistics on EJKs. But there has been an improvement. The government continues to raise EJKs, however, at ministerial level.

**Mr BROADBENT**—How do we go about generally keeping good relationships with the police entity in other countries? How do we do that? We have no rights whatsoever to be involved.

**Mr Choi**—You are absolutely right. We are not able to influence judicial processes. What we do though is simply register our interest in the case and request that local authorities undertake thorough investigations according to their usual processes. So it is literally simply based on our good relations that we build with counterparts in both the police but also Attorney-Generals and our counterparts in foreign affairs ministries.

**Mr BROADBENT**—Do we have a reasonably good name in that process?

**Mr Choi**—Yes, we do. It is not just with Foreign Affairs; we also have AFP liaison officers in country as well that do assist on a case-by-case basis in requesting the assistance of local authorities.

**Mr BROADBENT**—Are they generally well received by their hosts?

**Mr Choi**—Yes, they are. Certainly in this case we are.

**Mr BROADBENT**—I was not referring particularly to this case. Overall our position in the world is very important to this nation. When we are dealing with citizens, I just wondered about the effort. We obviously put a lot of effort into keeping very good relations, as best we possibly can, with agencies such as you are dealing with in this case.

**Mr Choi**—Yes, most definitely. It is a high priority for us, especially in consular cases, to ensure that we have those good relations. Again, we cannot influence these cases but we do draw on our capital and our good relations to ask for local assistance.

**Mr BROADBENT**—The reason I ask this line of questioning is that it is very important for the Australian people to know that this nation puts a lot of work into our relationships that are

not public relationships but relationships with other countries at all levels. It makes it very important that we are able to act in concert with our neighbours when we need each other.

**Mr Choi**—I think it is one of our highest priorities—to build good relations so that we have those links to draw on when required, such as in this case.

**Mr ADAMS**—And we will monitor this case right through?

**Mr Choi**—Certainly.

**Mr SIMPKINS**—When you said that the family had asked for the case to be transferred to a different court, did you say they wanted it transferred to Cebu?

**Mr Choi**—That is right.

**Mr SIMPKINS**—I just find it interesting because part of the petition cast doubt on the Cebu City police—it looks like they have a great doubt as to whether Cebu City police would properly investigate or be involved in this matter.

**Mr Choi**—Mr Simpkins, I do not know the motivations of the family but certainly that is the petition that they have put forward.

**CHAIR**—We will go to a petition that is before us regarding human rights in Sri Lanka dated 23 September 2008. Since that petition was tabled and the response of the minister of 2008 we have received several petitions regarding the situation in Sri Lanka. Given the recent developments in Sri Lanka and the recent statements by Stephen Smith, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in the House, is the department able to provide a short statement outlining the current position of the Australian government on this issue? The principal petitioner and the petitioners have not only signed this particular petition but others as well.

**Mr Holly**—The situation now in Sri Lanka is that the government has declared that they have defeated the LTTE in their battle and that they have concluded their military campaign. The priorities now for the international community, Australia and Sri Lanka are to ensure that the civilians that have escaped the conflict area are treated for and cared for in an appropriate way in displaced persons camps, that there is early resettlement of the civilians back into the areas that they have been driven out of because of the conflict in northern Sri Lanka and that the Sri Lankan government starts a process of political reform. These are the key elements that we need to go through and they were the key points that Minister Smith made in his statement to parliament on 12 May.

The key issue at the moment is looking at the humanitarian situation. The Australian government has provided \$23.5 million in humanitarian support since December 2008. It is quite a sizeable sum of money and really reflects the dire needs of the people in the particular area. We are also encouraging the Sri Lankan government to ensure that the UN and other international NGOs are able to get easy access into the area to ensure that aid and other relief can be delivered to the people there.

We are also looking more generally to try to see whether the early resettlement of civilians can take place, and the Sri Lankan government has committed itself to resettle over 80 per cent of the civilians by the end of this year. It will need help in doing so because many of the villages that people are from have been mined and need to be demined, and there will be a need, because of the conflict, to rebuild many of the villages that have been affected during the conflict.

In terms of the need to ensure that the Sri Lankan government starts a process of political reform, Minister Smith has said that in the moment of this military victory the Sri Lankan government 'must show the humanity and self-interest to win the peace' of the people. In that respect, we need to ensure that there is a political solution that meets the legitimate needs and aspirations of all Sri Lankans, and that process is very important to start with.

**CHAIR**—You mentioned in your statement the United Nations and other NGOs. Are you aware of whether any of them have been able to get access at this stage?

**Mr Holly**—They have been able to get access to some of the camps, but their level of access has been restricted in some areas as well. For example, the United Nations has indicated that it would like to be able to get into the last area of conflict because it is concerned that there are still civilians who have not been able to get access to aid and other medical facilities. There has been some denial of access or restriction of access by the Sri Lankan government as the Sri Lankan government goes through a process of determining whether people who are within the camps are LTTE members or in fact civilians. Until that process is sorted out, the Sri Lankan government is also limiting the access for some of these donors. Of course, the Australian government has been encouraging the Sri Lankan government, along with the international community, to ensure that that aid gets to the people as quickly as possible and that the United Nations is able to get in as quickly as possible.

**CHAIR**—Are there any further questions on this petition?

**Ms VAMVAKINO**—I have a couple of questions on the issue of the Sri Lankan government's reasons for denying access on the basis that they want to sift through who the Tigers are and who the civilians are. Are we aware of how they are making those distinctions, and are we satisfied that they have a system where they are able to process what they want to do in time to allow the UN to then move in and help the civilians? Is there an issue there?

The second question I have is this. Obviously, we have a very large Sri Lankan community in Australia and this issue affects them. Obviously we see it in Australian constituencies. In my own constituency, I have both groups. The Sinhalese tell me that they are very keen for reconciliation. It is important in our community that we manage a process that can become difficult. We have seen aspects of it, albeit isolated cases, but I know there is a big issue about the Tamil flag, and I know we get petitioned about that. It is an equally difficult time for us in Australia who have the large Sri Lankan communities as it is, I guess, in Sri Lanka. How they manage their reconciliation is one thing, but are we thinking about how we might want to approach that issue here?

**Mr Holly**—Thank you very much for both those questions. In relation to how the Sri Lankan government is going about the process of determining which individuals may be with the LTTE and which are civilians, I am not aware of the details of that. We would like to be able to get

more information by allowing bodies like the United Nations and others to get access to the camps so that we can have more information in relation to that. I am not able to inform the committee any more.

**Ms VAMVAKINO**—I understand. I did not think we would.

**Mr Holly**—In terms of the community here in Australia, you are quite correct: it is a divided community. This committee has received two petitions. One we are considering today concerns the plight of the Tamils. There is another petition that has been received, after 19 March, which talks about the atrocities that the LTTE are committing. I think that is just representative of the fact that the community here is divided, and we have seen in Sydney just recently some atrocities and attacks that perhaps are an expression of that division. As the minister has said in his statement in parliament, there is a need for the Sri Lankan community to unite and also to work at this time of the finalisation of conflict to mend any wounds that have occurred. We hope that the Sri Lankan government will take a strong leadership role in its process of—for want of a better term—reconciliation, and we hope that that will also be a cue for the domestic population, the diaspora here in Australia, to heed and work forward to ensure that we do not have any more violence within Australia.

**Ms VAMVAKINO**—But beyond the call, I guess, DFAT itself is not involved in any practical measures at all or networking in any way where it would be a bit more proactive about bringing some of those groupings together?

**Mr Holly**—We meet very regularly with Tamil groupings and also Sinhalese groupings here. Most recently, for example, I met with a group of protesters who were representative of 3,000 protesters at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. I met with three of the hunger strikers at that time. They conveyed particular messages to me. And of course we have other, not quite so public, meetings as well with groupings to understand both the situation in Sri Lanka and the concerns of the community here.

**CHAIR**—Considering the time, I think I can take one more question. We have a number of other petitions.

**Mr CHESTER**—How does the access issue affect the reliability of the information you are getting, and where are people sourcing their information? Are we confident that they are getting accurate information about the situation over there? Are you confident about the information you are receiving on the ground?

**Mr Holly**—The situation is very fluid. We are reasonably confident with the information we have received. The UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, has just visited Sri Lanka—he was there on the 22nd and 23rd, I think it was—so we have a very good picture from his visit as to what the situation is. He has confirmed the need for a continuing focus on humanitarian assistance to the people there and for the camps to continue to have their facilities upgraded to ensure that the overcrowding situation does not continue. What we would like to do and what we have been doing with the international community is calling for additional access to those camps and to everyone who has been affected so that we can get a more comprehensive picture, but, as you can imagine, the developments over the last couple of weeks have been very significant and

the information we are getting is fluid. But, through the international organisations, we are hoping that the information that we have is as accurate as possible.

**CHAIR**—We will now go to a petition concerning a social security agreement between Australia and the Philippines. We have not received a response from the minister—although, because we have received a response from Minister Macklin, I presume that a response from Minister Smith is therefore not necessary. But I would like to put on the record that the committee are very happy with the prompt response that we get from the department to a lot of our petitions. I am just wondering, since we do not have a formal response to this petition, whether we will be receiving one at a later date, or could we just go to questions now regarding it?

**Mr Trappett**—Chair, do you mean a response from Minister Smith?

**CHAIR**—Yes.

**Mr Trappett**—It is my understanding that one will not be forthcoming.

**CHAIR**—Because of the response from Minister Macklin?

**Mr Trappett**—Yes, that is right.

**CHAIR**—Fine. I will just go to a straightforward question then. Is the department aware of whether in this case there is a social security agreement planned between Australia and the Philippines?

**Mr Trappett**—The answer to that is that at this stage it is not planned to negotiate one. In November last year DFAT received FaHCSIA's international strategy for 2008-2010. The Philippines was not listed as a priority in that strategy. I note that FaHCSIA officials testified before your committee in February. My reading of that was that they thought that a meeting between Philippine officials and them in November, I think it was, was more a sort of information exchange than a formal approach. This might be re-entered in FaHCSIA's next forward international strategy, but at this stage it is not listed as a priority to negotiate a particular agreement.

**CHAIR**—Are there any further questions on this petition?

**Mr SIMPKINS**—Are we not doing whales?

**CHAIR**—Have you got a question on that?

**Mr SIMPKINS**—No, I thought we were covering it.

**CHAIR**—I do not think we have had a response to that petition yet. I am watching the time. We have the department in here quite often. We could go back to the petition that is before us, but we have still got a few here. We will go to Iraqi Christians. The Minister for Foreign Affairs stated on page 1 of his response to a question in writing:

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On 19 December 2008 I announced the Australian Government would provide \$1 million to assist Christian and other minority groups in Ninewa Province ...

Is the department able to provide any update on the expenditure of this money and advise on any observations of the situation there?

**Mr Hawkins**—Yes, Madam Chair. I will take your second question first. The Australian government continues to be concerned about the persecution of minority groups in Iraq, including Christians. Although the security situation has improved significantly, there continues to be instances of violence against Christians by extremist groups in Iraq. The Australian government continues to urge the Iraqi government to do all it can to protect the human rights of all Iraqis, including Iraqi Christians. Since the petition, during a meeting with his counterpart, Hoshyar Zebari, on 12 March, Foreign Minister Smith raised concerns about the situation of Syrian Christians specifically. We continue to monitor the human rights situation in Iraq and we have instructed our embassy to make representations on human rights issues at every opportunity.

On 7 April this year our ambassador in Baghdad discussed human rights issues with the Iraqi Minister of Human Rights, Ms Wijdan Salim, who I note is also a Christian. Also, this year the embassy staff have discussed the treatment of minority groups with the Human Rights Committee of Iraq's Council of Representatives, their parliament, and on 25 May Foreign Minister Smith met representatives of the Assyrian Universal Alliance. We are continuing to monitor the situation there very closely, but I would also note that the Iraqi constitution guarantees the rights of minority groups including Christians. In November 2008 the Iraqi Council of Representatives approved an amendment to the electoral law reserving parliamentary representation for minority groups including Christians, and in April this year Vice President Al-Mahdi called on Christians to stay in Iraq and acknowledged the responsibility of the government to look after Christians.

As to how the spending has proceeded, we have a brief provided by AusAID on how the money was disbursed. Half a million dollars was granted to the International Medical Corps and this was used to rehabilitate three schools in a district to which 2,000 families had fled. This particular district had a large proportion of Christians. Of course this assistance is not only for Christians. It also covers a large majority of Christians who fled Mosul in October 2008. Another \$500,000 was disbursed by UNHCR for 4,000 families in Ninewa, which included about 2,000 Christians. Half of those families were Christian families who had fled sectarian violence. We can ask AusAID to provide more details on that if you wish.

**CHAIR**—If you could do that, it would be appreciated by the petitioners.

**Ms VAMVAKINO**—I have one quick question. On the issue of human rights and Assyrian Christians in Iraq, obviously on the constitution front they are guaranteed rights that we would find acceptable, so how much of it is an issue of a struggle for self-determination by the Assyrian Christians within their own geographical region? I am just trying to work out where the emphasis is greater.

**Mr Hawkins**—We are aware that the Assyrian Christians have called for an autonomous region in the north of Iraq. This was a matter raised with Foreign Minister Smith, but ultimately

this is a matter for the Iraqi government. Australia supports the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq as reaffirmed by the UN Security Council resolution. Within the Iraqi constitution the Kurds have a region, and so it is really up to the Christians to work within the Iraqi system if they wish to take that wish for autonomy forward.

**CHAIR**—I am going to refer to a petition from the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils—it called for an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip—and the minister’s reply of 1 April. I note also a similar petition entitled ‘Stop the war on Gaza’ arrived just as the ministerial response to the earlier petition was received by this committee. I am just wondering if the department can advise on recent developments in Gaza and the current diplomatic position of the Australian government.

**Ms Faulkner**—So you are asking for an update on the situation in Gaza—

**CHAIR**—Yes—and the current diplomatic position.

**Ms Faulkner**—and the position of the Australian government? Okay. In terms of the situation in Gaza, the committee may be aware that unilateral ceasefires were declared by both the Palestinians and Israel around 18 January and that effectively those ceasefires have held. There have been some intermittent acts of violence since that time, but there has been a radical diminishing of violence since the December-January conflict and of course the rocket attacks that occurred in the second half of last year in particular.

In terms of the humanitarian situation, I do have here an update of the really important question of humanitarian access. The source of that is the May report of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. As the committee will be aware, the humanitarian situation of the people of the Gaza Strip has been a major preoccupation. The amount of humanitarian and non-humanitarian goods flowing into the strip have improved. It has improved since before the conflict. The statistic that may help is that 682 truckloads of goods entered into Gaza between 10 and 16 May as well as some shipments of industrial fuel. By way of comparison, in November last, prior to the conflict, there were on average 23 trucks a day that were entering Gaza. The UN and aid agencies are still reporting critical shortages of some items. In that, they cite clothing, schoolbooks, agricultural produce and some basic building materials. So obviously what is highly desirable in this situation is a sustained reopening of border crossings.

**CHAIR**—As there are no further questions on this petition and we have five minutes, I think we might go back to whaling—that sounds good, doesn’t it! As you are aware, we have a petition here concerning whaling. The minister wrote back to the committee on 16 October. The response we received from the minister was very comprehensive, and we thank him and the department for that. I wonder whether the department would like to advise of any changes in any of the policies outlined in the letter, given that it was written in October 2008.

**Dr Adler**—I will give you an overview of where our policy is at the moment. We remain resolute in our opposition to commercial and so-called ‘scientific’ whaling, and we are pursuing all avenues for a diplomatic solution to this problem in the International Whaling Commission, with the end objective being an end to scientific whaling. Mr Smith has had a number of discussions with Japanese ministers over the last year, and the government, both at the level of

officials and at the political level, is continuing ongoing dialogue with the Japanese. As I mentioned earlier, we are continuing to push strongly for an end to scientific whaling in ongoing talks on the future of the IWC, and we are very much taking the position that the IWC needs to take a modern approach to oceans management and focus on conservation issues associated with whale stocks.

The government has committed over \$32 million in measures over six years to create the world's largest international non-lethal whale research program, and this includes \$6 million this financial year to kick-start non-lethal whale research and scientific partnerships with other countries, beginning in the Southern Ocean. Mr Garrett and Mr Smith have also appointed Mr Sandy Hollway AO as Australia's Special Envoy for Whale Conservation. He has been the envoy since early October 2008. Mr Hollway has been deepening our dialogue with leaders in Japan and other countries to help find a diplomatic solution to the problem of whaling. That is in a nutshell where we are up to at the moment.

**CHAIR**—We do appreciate that.

**Mr ADAMS**—In regard to our obligations of safety at sea, international conventions et cetera, have there been any issues about the incident that occurred in the Southern Ocean some time ago in relation to one ship hitting another ship? My motivation on this is that working people have a right to some protection. I am concerned that this incident took place, endangering people's lives. Has anything been lodged with the Australian government in relation to that? I know we do not let whaling ships into our ports unless there is an emergency situation.

**Dr Adler**—I will ask Dr Greg French to answer that question.

**Dr French**—The Australian government has consistently said—and Mr Smith is on the record as stating—that all vessels in that area, whether associated with whaling or otherwise, should act in accordance with their international legal obligations to ensure safety of life at sea, particularly in accordance with the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, as well as customary international law. In all of our communications, whether directly or publicly, we have been emphasising that we see it as paramount to ensure that human life is protected and that any parties to the dispute, irrespective of their views or their role, respect the international norms which govern safety of life at sea.

**Mr SIMPKINS**—I would just like to know what your feelings are about the next IWC session and how the numbers are going for the right side of the argument.

**Dr French**—I might defer again—

**CHAIR**—You might want to take that notice, because that is not really to do with the petition that is before us today.

**Mr SIMPKINS**—It sounds like there is still a comment, though, Chair!

**CHAIR**—We are out of time. That is not relevant to the petition before us. I would like to thank everyone for their participation today. The commitment of government departments to the work of the committee and thus to the work of the House is really appreciated. I also want to

thank the secretariat staff, who do a fantastic job with the petitions committee, and Hansard. Thank you very much.

Resolved (on motion by **Mr Simpkins**):

That this committee authorises publication, including publication on the parliamentary database, of the transcript of the evidence given before it at public hearing this day.

**Committee adjourned at 11.44 am**