Maritime safety and the future of tourism

Improving Australia's maritime safety and the future direction of the tourism industry in Australia will be on the agenda when two treaties are examined on Monday.

The Treaties Committee will investigate the International Maritime Organisation's (IMO) Instrument Implementation Code which provides a mandatory audit scheme aimed at improving maritime safety.

The IMO is the United Nations agency responsible for the safety, security and environmental performance of international shipping. A range of relevant IMO conventions will need to be amended to make sure the Code applies to regulations such as fire safety and management and environmental standards. The audit will help Australia and other countries ensure compliance with IMO regulations.

Committee Chair, Wyatt Roy MP, said Australia already takes part in the audit scheme on a voluntary basis.

"Making the scheme mandatory will encourage ongoing compliance and help the IMO identify countries that require assistance to meet its standards," he said.

The committee is also looking at a proposal for Australia to withdraw from the World Tourism Organization (WTO).

The WTO is another United Nations agency which provides an international forum for promoting sustainable and accessible tourism. The proposed withdrawal has been prompted by claims that Australia is not receiving value for money from its membership of the organisation. It has been suggested that Australia would benefit more from membership of bodies that focus on its key tourism markets, such as the APEC Tourism Working Group and the OECD Tourism Committee.

"It is the committee's responsibility to ensure that treaty actions are in the national interest. We will be carefully examining the arguments for and against this proposal before we make any recommendation to the Government," Mr Roy said.

MEDIA CONTACTS		
Media contact:	**Mr Wyatt Roy MP**	**0421 059 438**
Background:	**Committee Secretariat**	**(02) 6277 4002**

Telephone:	02 6277 4002	PARLIAMENT HOUSE
Facsimile:	02 6277 2219	CANBERRA ACT 2600
E-mail:	jsct@aph.gov.au	
Website:	www.aph.gov.au/jsct	