



Australian Flag Company

A division of Intrad Pty Ltd
Since 1982
ABN 025 008 549 433

14 April 2014

Committee Secretariat
Senate Finance and Public Administration Committees
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Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

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Dear Committee Members,

This submission covers the proposed amendment to the Flags Amendment Bill 2014. This bill proposes to amend the *National Flag Act 1953* to require that Australian flags flown, used or supplied by the Commonwealth are only manufactured in Australia from Australian materials. In this regard and as a manufacturer, supplier and exporter of the Australian National Flag amongst other flags for more than 26 years, we would humbly advise the Committee Senators the following:

- There are no weaving mills in Australia that can on a cost effective scale, provide a bunting flag cloth for the fully sewn flags required by the Commonwealth. The potential for a cottage craft manufacturing scale weaving is always possible, but would set local manufacturing input costs to record high levels and destroy our export competitiveness as with others; and
- The Polyester yarn which is woven as part of the flag bunting material is not manufactured in Australia and it is therefore impossible to envisage we can manufacture flag materials required for the fully sewn bunting flags in Australia. As you may understand not all polyester fibre is the same and certainly local carpet grade polyester fibre is totally unsuited for flag making.
- The lack of competitive local material inputs is quite common amongst Australian manufacturers, whereas the capacity to secure quality competitive materials from any source enhances the competitiveness of downstream local manufacturers such as our business and is very much the basis of our export competitiveness.

We also direct the Senate Committee's attention to Australian Government agencies who are charged with enforcement of restrictions of importing the Australian national flag:

- The importation of goods which bear an image or representation of the Australian national flag is restricted under the Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956.

- Australian Customs and Border Protection Service are responsible for the day-to-day operation of this law.
- Many Commonwealth departments are involved in supporting local flag manufacturing as every Australian national flag imported must have approval from the Commonwealth Officer at the Honours, Symbols and Territories Branch of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

In order to make the proposed legislative amendments practical for the long term Australian industry viability we suggest the following changes:

- "...Australian flags flown, used or supplied by the Commonwealth are only manufactured in Australia." That is minus the qualifying "from Australian materials"
- Item 7.5 read "The headband shall be cotton/polyester duck, natural or equivalent in two widths, one suitable for use with a flagpole for internal use (with an open pocket of 32mm) and one fitted with clips for external use." As the existing description is technically redundant for modern flag construction which often utilises automatic hoisting with internal mechanisms not envisaged in 1953

I am willing to meet to discuss these matters with the Senate Committee or individual members if required for further clarification.

I thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours faithfully,

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