



## **Committee delivers report on cluster munitions convention**

The Parliament's Treaties Committee has recommended that Australia ratify the *Convention on Cluster Munitions*.

The Committee's Report 103 reviews the Convention, which is aimed at ending the use of these dangerous munitions.

"The Committee is keen to make sure Australia complies with both the spirit and the letter of the Convention," the Committee Chair, Mr Kelvin Thomson MP, stated. "To that end, the Committee has recommended the Government and the Australian Defence Force implement the Convention in such a way as to ensure the humanitarian intent of the Convention is carried through into practice by Australia."

"The Committee's recommendation should ensure that the key terms of the Convention are interpreted in such a way as to strengthen the Convention's humanitarian intent. The recommendation should also prevent inadvertent participation in the use, or assistance in the use, of cluster munitions by Australia; and prevent investment by Australian entities in the development or production of cluster munitions," Mr Thomson said.

Unexploded bomblets from cluster munitions are estimated to have caused over 13,000 civilian casualties, and prevent the use of infrastructure and agricultural land in many former war zones. By ratifying the Convention, Australia hopes to encourage other states to do the same, delegitimising the use of cluster munitions.

Report 103 considers two other treaty actions: the *Agreement between Australia and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam concerning the Transfer of Sentenced Persons*; and the *Agreement on Employment of Spouses and Dependants of Diplomatic and Consular Personnel between Australia and the Portuguese Republic*.

The Agreement with Vietnam concerning the transfer of sentenced persons will allow Australians imprisoned in Vietnam to serve their sentences in Australia, without the language and cultural barriers which can reduce their prospects of rehabilitation, and where they have access to families and other support networks.

The Agreement on the employment of the families of Australian diplomatic personnel in Portugal is one of a series of agreements reflecting the changing nature of Australian society and changing social mores of Australia's diplomatic community. This Agreement and its equivalents assist the Australian Government in recruiting and retaining high-quality employees with families willing to serve abroad.

Report 103 is available on the Committee's website: [www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/reports.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/reports.htm) or by contacting the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4002.

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