

## Introduction

### Purpose of the report

- 1.1 The Joint Standing Committee on Treaties conducted a review of two treaty actions tabled in Parliament on 8 August 2006.<sup>1</sup> These treaty actions are:
- *Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the People's Republic of China on the Transfer of Nuclear Material* (Canberra, 3 April 2006)
  - *Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the People's Republic of China for Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy* (Canberra, 3 April 2006).
- 1.2 The Committee's review of these treaty actions is focused on whether the treaties are in Australia's national interest. To this effect, the Committee has concentrated on the main issues arising from the treaties: the impact of the sale of uranium to China; and safeguarding the use of Australian uranium. Where appropriate, the Committee has also provided information on issues arising from the indirect impact of the treaty actions, namely environmental and social issues.
- 1.3 A summary of the evidence submitted to this inquiry is included in this report. Chapter 2 examines the Nuclear Material Transfer Agreement. Chapter 3 examines the Nuclear Cooperation Agreement. Chapters 4 and 5 outline issues surrounding the expected impact of

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<sup>1</sup> Australia, House of Representatives 2004-05-06, *Votes and Proceedings*, No. 112, p. 1268; Senate 2004-06, *Journal*, No. 91, p. 2379. The remaining treaties tabled on 8 August 2006 are included in the Committee's Report 77.

the Agreements and safeguarding the use of Australian uranium. Chapter 6 outlines the Committee's conclusions and its recommendations in relation to the issues raised during the inquiry. The Committee also makes comment about the inquiry timeframe.

## Briefing documents

- 1.4 The advice in this Report refers to the National Interest Analyses (NIAs) prepared for the proposed treaty actions. These documents are prepared by the Government agency (or agencies) responsible for the administration of Australia's responsibilities under each treaty. Copies of the NIAs may be obtained from the Committee Secretariat or accessed through the Committee's website at:

[www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/8august2006/tor.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/8august2006/tor.htm)

- 1.5 Copies of treaty actions and NIAs may also be obtained from the Australian Treaties Library maintained on the internet by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The Australian Treaties Library is accessible through the Committee's website or directly at:

[www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/dfat/](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/dfat/)

## The Committee's review

- 1.6 The review contained in this report was advertised in the national press and on the Committee's website.<sup>2</sup> Invitations to lodge submissions were also sent to all State Premiers, Chief Ministers, Presiding Members of Parliament, stakeholder organisations and to individuals who have expressed an interest in being kept informed of proposed treaty actions. Submissions received and their authors are listed at Appendix A. Exhibits received are listed at Appendix B.

- 1.7 The Committee also received evidence at public hearings held on 4 September and 16 October 2006 in Canberra, 5 October 2006 in Adelaide, 6 October 2006 in Perth and 25 October 2006 in Melbourne. A list of witnesses who appeared before the Committee at public hearings is at Appendix C. Transcripts of evidence from public hearings may be obtained from the Committee Secretariat or accessed through the Committee's website at:

[www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/8august2006/hearings2.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/8august2006/hearings2.htm)

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2 The Committee's review of the proposed treaty actions was advertised in *The Australian* on 16, 23 August and 6 September 2006. Members of the public were advised on how to obtain relevant information and invited to submit their views to the Committee, both in the advertisement and via the Committee's website.