



JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON TREATIES

**MEDIA ALERT**

Issued: 11 March 2004

**Attention: National media**

## **Public Inquiry into the Australia-US Free Trade Agreement**

Andrew Southcott MP, Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties, is pleased to announce details of the public inquiry being held by the Treaties Committee into the Free Trade Agreement with the United States.

The Minister for Trade, Mark Vaile, has now formally referred the AUSFTA to the Committee for inquiry and report to Parliament.

"I am today writing to all State Premiers and Territory Chief Ministers as well as Presiding Officers of State and Territory Parliaments to seek their input," Dr Southcott said.

Email alerts are also going out today to organisations and individuals known to have an interest in the inquiry.

An advertisement will be placed in *The Australian* on Wednesday, 17 March, inviting submissions to the inquiry.

Submissions will close on Tuesday, 13 April. Public hearings will be held at various locations around Australia from Monday, 19 April and finishing on Friday, 14 May.

The Committee is required to report back to Parliament by Wednesday, 23 June.

"This is a balanced committee with representation from Government, Opposition and minor parties. It has six members of the Labor Party, eight from the Liberal Party, one National Party and one Democrat," Dr Southcott said.

"The Joint Standing Committee on Treaties was established by the Howard Government in 1996 to specifically deal with treaties such as the AUSFTA."

(A copy of the Committee timetable follows.)

**Media contact:** John Deller on (08) 8374 0511 or 0439 802 767  
**Inquiry contact:** Julia Morris on (02) 6277 4002



**Australia - US Free Trade Agreement**

**Public Inquiry Timetable**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Action/ Location</b>
March 10	Write to State, Territory Governments Email alert to subscribers
March 17	Advert in <i>The Australian</i> newspaper, calling for submissions
April 13	Closing date for submissions
April 19	Sydney (public hearings commence)
April 20	Melbourne
April 21	Hobart
April 22	Adelaide
April 23	Perth
May 3	Darwin
May 4	Cairns
May 5	Brisbane
May 6	Sydney
May 14	Canberra (Govt and peak bodies)

The Committee will consider other locations, based on public submissions.  
Public Submissions should be posted to:

The Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Or by email to: [jsct@aph.gov.au](mailto:jsct@aph.gov.au)

Closing date is Tuesday, 13 April 2004. The full text of the Agreement can be found at [www.dfat.gov.au](http://www.dfat.gov.au). The site states that the Agreement is in draft form and subject to legal review for accuracy, clarity and consistency. Further information on the inquiry is available on the Committee's website:

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/>

(Ends.)