



Treaties Committee Chair welcomes government response to ACTA report

The Chair of the Treaties Committee, Mr Kelvin Thomson MP, has welcomed the Government's response to the Committee's review of the controversial Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA).

ACTA is an agreement designed to strengthen intellectual property standards around the world. It focuses on trademark and copyright enforcement and establishes a legal framework for IP enforcement.

However, the Committee concluded that the agreement contained a number of flaws.

"The Committee was concerned about the lack of clarity in the text, the exclusion of provisions protecting the rights of individuals, and ACTA's potential to shift the balance in the interpretation of copyright law, intellectual property law and patent law", Mr Thomson said.

The Committee made nine recommendations, including that the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement not be ratified by Australia until the:

- Treaties Committee has received and considered an independent and transparent assessment of ACTA's economic and social benefits and costs;
- Australian Law Reform Commission has reported on its Inquiry into Copyright and the Digital Economy; and the
- Australian Government has issued notices of clarification in relation to the terms of the Agreement.

Mr Thomson has welcomed the fact that the Government has agreed, either outright, in principle or in part to all the recommendations.

"I also welcome the fact that the Government only intends to consider ratification of ACTA following the receipt of the analysis recommended by the Committee."

The Committee's more detailed views on ACTA were covered in Report 126. It, and the Government's response, can be found on the committee's website:

http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_Committees?url=jsct/reports.htm or by contacting the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4002.

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