

## Introduction

### **Purpose of the report**

- 1.1 This report contains the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties' review of five treaty actions tabled on 9 and 10 February and on 1 March 2011.
- 1.2 These treaty actions are proposed for ratification and are examined in the order of tabling:
  - **Tabled 9 and 10 February 2011**
    - ⇒ *Agreement between Australia and the Slovak Republic on Social Security* (New York, 21 September 2010)
    - ⇒ *Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the Republic of South Africa concerning the Co-Production of Films* (Pretoria, 18 June 2010)
    - ⇒ *Third Protocol Amending the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia* (Hanoi, 23 July 2010)
    - ⇒ *Treaty between Australia and the People's Republic of China concerning the Transfer of Sentenced Persons* (Sydney, 6 September 2007)
  - **Tabled 1 March 2011**
    - ⇒ *Amendments to Singapore–Australia Free Trade Agreement* (Singapore, 27 July 2009)
- 1.3 The Committee's resolution of appointment empowers it to inquire into any treaty to which Australia has become signatory, on the treaty being tabled in Parliament.

- 1.4 The treaties, and matters arising from them, are evaluated to ensure that ratification is in the national interest, and that unintended or negative effects on Australians will not be entailed.
- 1.5 Prior to tabling, major treaty actions are subject to a *National Interest Analysis* (NIA), prepared by Government. This document considers arguments for and against the treaty, outlines the treaty obligations and any regulatory or financial implications, and reports the results of consultations undertaken with State and Territory Governments, Federal and State and Territory agencies, and with industry or non-government organisations.
- 1.6 A *Regulation Impact Statement* (RIS), which provides a more detailed analysis of treaties requiring a more substantial review of domestic legislation or which have greater financial impact, may accompany the NIA.
- 1.7 The Committee takes account of these documents in its examination of the treaty text, in addition to other evidence taken during the inquiry program.
- 1.8 Copies of each treaty and its associated documentation may be obtained from the Committee Secretariat or accessed through the Committee's website at:  
  
<[www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct)>

## **Conduct of the Committee's review**

- 1.9 The treaty actions reviewed in this report were advertised on the Committee's website from the date of tabling and in the national press on 9 March 2011. Submissions were invited by 21 March 2011, with extensions available on request.
- 1.10 Invitations were made to all State Premiers, Chief Ministers and to the Presiding Officers of each Parliament to lodge submissions. The Committee also invited submissions from individuals and organisations with an interest in the particular treaty under review.
- 1.11 Submissions received and their authors are listed at Appendix A.
- 1.12 The Committee examined the witnesses on each treaty at public hearings held in Canberra on 25 and 28 February 2011, and on 25 March 2011.

- 1.13 Transcripts of evidence from the public hearings may be obtained from the Committee Secretariat or accessed through the Committee's website under the treaty's tabling date, being:
- **9 February and 10 February 2011**  
<[www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/9february2011/hearings.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/9february2011/hearings.htm)>
  - **1 March 2011**  
<[www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/1march2011/hearings.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/1march2011/hearings.htm)>
- 1.14 A list of witnesses who appeared at the public hearings is at Appendix B.

