



# Treaties Committee supports tighter controls for plastic explosives

Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties, Dr Andrew Southcott MP, today (Monday 14 August) tabled *Report 75*, which includes a recommendation that Australia ratify the Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection.

The Convention, one of 13 of the United Nations' conventions and protocols on terrorism, was drafted in response to the 1988 bombing of PAN Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland. Under the Convention, the marking of plastic explosives makes them more easily identifiable, thereby inhibiting their improper and unlawful use.

Acceding to the Convention will oblige Australia to incorporate the detectable odour agent – 2, 3-dimethyl-2, 3-dinitrobutane or DMNB into plastic explosives during manufacture. In addition, the Convention requires the strict control of the possession and transfer of existing stocks of unmarked plastic explosives into and out of Australia.

“Acceding to this treaty will signify Australia’s continued commitment to combating the threat of global terrorism and serve to strengthen Australia’s reputation as an authority on counter terrorism initiatives in the Asia-Pacific Region,” Dr Southcott said.

The Committee also recommended amendments to the Singapore-Australia Free Trade Agreement entering into force. These amendments will allow Australian law firms better access to Singapore; remove the quota for wholesale bank licences from 1 January 2007; and will allow State and Territory Governments reservations in several areas including professional services.

In addition to the above treaty action, *Report 75: Treaties tabled on 11 October (2), 28 February and 28 March 2006 (2)* outlines the Committee's review and recommendations that binding treaty action be taken in relation to five other treaties. These are: Amendments to the Basel Convention on Hazardous Waste; Establishment of the Pacific Islands Forum; Protocol to the Convention on Establishment of an International Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage; Compensation for Oil Bunker Damage Convention; and Mutual recognition of securities offerings with New Zealand.

Report 75 is available on the Committee’s website:  
<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/report.htm>  
or by contacting the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4002.

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