



Tasmania

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BY:.....

Ms Julie Bishop MP
Committee Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Bishop

Thank you for your letter of 3 December 2002 inviting comment on various international treaties that are being reviewed by the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties.

I understand that officials from the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment have contributed to the preparation of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, through intergovernmental consultative processes.

The Tasmanian Government believes that significant benefits will accrue to agriculture as a result of being able to access genetic material to develop new plant and crop varieties and therefore supports ratification of the Treaty.

Tasmania would however strongly support the establishment of a formal consultation mechanism between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories concerning Australia's position on matters that are to be considered by the Treaty's Governing Body. Many of the issues and obligations that will be dealt with by the Governing Body will impact upon the States and Territories, such as the terms of access and benefit sharing for plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and the terms and conditions of the Material Transfer Agreement.

Importantly, ongoing broad consultation with the States and Territories would ensure that impacts across all jurisdictions are given due consideration in formulating the positions Australia takes as part of the Governing Body.

At this stage, the Tasmanian Government does not wish to make any further comments on issues arising from the other proposed treaties and their National Interest Assessments.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely



Jim Bacon MHA
Premier