



Australian Government

Department of Education, Science and Training

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Submission No: 9

Mrs Margaret May MP
Acting Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
Suite R1 109
Department of House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra, ACT, 2600

Dear Mrs May

RE: SUPPLEMENTARY AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND CONCERNING THE ANGLO-AUSTRALIAN OPTICAL TELESCOPE, AT SIDING SPRING, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA

I am writing to provide the Committee with further information that may assist in its consideration of the Supplementary Agreement. The further information refers to the submission provided to the Committee by Mr Jon Stanhope MLA, Chief Minister, Australian Capital Territory.

The Chief Minister's submission asserts that the "The Siding Springs Observatory site is owned by the ANU and managed by the RSAA (Research School of Astronomy and Astrophysics)". I consider that this statement may give an incorrect impression regarding the role of the ANU/RSAA in relation to the Anglo-Australian Telescope (AAT). The Committee may wish to note that, while the AAT site is leased from the ANU, the ANU does not own the AAT or have any direct role in managing or operating the facility. The AAT is owned jointly by the Australian and UK governments and managed and operated by the Anglo-Australian Telescope Board, a Commonwealth statutory authority established by the *Anglo-Australian Telescope Agreement Act 1970*.

The Chief Minister's letter also suggests that the RSSA was "unaware of the proposed Agreement". My understanding is that the ANU and the RSAA have been fully aware of the Supplementary Agreement, through its links to the Anglo-Australian Telescope Board (AATB), from the commencement of negotiations until their recent conclusion.

The Committee may wish to note that the initial Commonwealth negotiator on the treaty was Professor Lawrence Cram, the then DEST representative on the AATB. Professor Cram is now Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) at the Australian National University.

From the commencement of negotiations in 2002 until July 2004, Professor KC Freeman of the RSAA was a member of the AATB. Shortly after Professor Freeman's appointment to the Board lapsed, Dr Brian Schmidt, also of the RSAA, was appointed to the Board (in December 2004). In addition I am advised by Dr Matthew Colless, Director of the Anglo-Australian Observatory, that he has provided regular briefings on the Supplementary Agreement to his counterpart at the RSAA, Professor Penny Sackett, since he assumed his post in early 2004.

Please contact Mr Michael Bryson on 6240 7240 if you required any further information.

Yours sincerely



So
Dr Evan Arthur
Group Manager
Innovation and Research Systems Group

September 2005