

Introduction

Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report contains advice to Parliament on the review by the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties of three treaty actions tabled in Parliament on 3 December 2008 and 3 February 2009. These treaty actions are:
- *Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (New York, 13 December 2006)*¹
 - *Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the British Virgin Islands for the Exchange of Information Relating to Taxes (London, 27 October 2008)*
 - *Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the British Virgin Islands for the Allocation of Taxing Rights with Respect to Certain Income of Individuals (London, 27 October 2008)*².
- 1.2 The Report refers frequently to the National Interest Analysis (NIA) prepared for each proposed treaty action. This document is prepared by the Government agency (or agencies) responsible for the administration of Australia's responsibilities under each treaty.

1 Australia, House of Representatives 2008, *Votes and Proceedings*, No. 68, p. 784; Australia, Senate 2008, *Journal*, No. 51, p. 1389.

2 Australia, House of Representatives 2008-09, *Votes and Proceedings*, No. 70, p. 811; Australia, Senate 2008-09, *Journal*, No. 53, p. 1480.

Copies of each NIA may be obtained from the Committee Secretariat or accessed through the Committee's website at:

www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/3december2008/tor.htm

www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/3february2009/tor.htm

- 1.3 Copies of each treaty action and NIA may also be obtained from the Australian Treaties Library maintained on the internet by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The Australian Treaties Library is accessible through the Committee's website or directly at:

www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/dfat/

Conduct of the Committee's Review

- 1.4 The reviews contained in this report were advertised in the national press and on the Committee's website.³ Invitations to lodge submissions were also sent to all State Premiers, Chief Ministers, Presiding Officers of parliaments and to individuals who have expressed an interest in being kept informed of proposed treaty actions. Submissions received and their authors are listed at Appendix A and Exhibits received are listed at Appendix B.
- 1.5 The Committee also received evidence at a public hearing on 23 February 2009 in Canberra. A list of witnesses who appeared at the public hearing is at Appendix C. Transcripts of evidence from public hearings may be obtained from the Committee Secretariat or accessed through the Committee's website at:

www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/3february2009/hearings.htm

3 The Committee's review of the proposed treaty actions was advertised in *The Australian* on 18 February 2009. Members of the public were advised on how to obtain relevant information both in the advertisement and via the Committee's website, and invited to submit their views to the Committee.