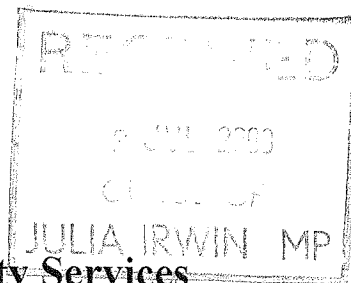




The Hon Jenny Macklin MP
Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services
and Indigenous Affairs



Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Telephone: (02) 6277 7560
Facsimile: (02) 6273 4122

26 JUN 2008

MC08-016657

Mrs Julia Irwin MP
Member for Fowler
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON
PETITIONS
received 7.7.08

Dear Mrs Irwin *Julia*

Thank you for your letter of 27 May 2008 about a petition presented by the Speaker of the House on 26 May 2008 about access to pension entitlements from Latvia.

I am pleased to inform you that Australian and Latvian officials are negotiating a proposed Social Security Agreement between Australia and Latvia (the Agreement). The proposed Agreement will coordinate the two countries' social security schemes to provide improved social security coverage for people who have lived and worked in Australia and Latvia. The Agreement will, among other things, seek to ensure people living in Australia can access any Latvian pension entitlements they may have.

Officials in Australia and Latvia are continuing to work collaboratively to finalise negotiations. Once finalised the proposed Agreement must be submitted to both Governments for approval. I am hopeful that this will occur in 2008-09.

Thank you again for writing.

Yours sincerely

JENNY MACKLIN MP