

Senate Economics Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Industry, Tourism and Resources Portfolio

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2005-2006, 2 November 2005

Consultations are also conducted with groups of invited stakeholders who represent specific or sensitive sectoral concerns (e.g. automotives, textiles, clothing and footwear, and resources). Invite lists for these forums are generally developed with the participation of relevant Chambers of Commerce, Industry Associations and State Government agencies.

The negotiating team also consults individually with major companies, peak body industry organisations, unions and other prominent NGOs. This usually involves a visit by officers of the negotiating team to the organisation's premises or a visit by the organisation to Canberra.

The consultation process is supplemented through public submissions. All members of the public are invited to make a submission on the FTA to DFAT, summarising their views, concerns and interests. All public submissions are reviewed and points raised are used in developing Australia's negotiating position. Officers of DITR review all public submissions of relevance to the Department's responsibilities. To date, over 100 public submissions on the FTA have been received.

QUESTION No.SBI-62

Senator Campbell asked:

Can you outline the forward schedule for the FTA process from here?

ANSWER

The fourth round of negotiations is scheduled to be held in Canberra in February or March of 2006. No firm date has yet been agreed with the Chinese. The two sides have so far been engaged in exchanging information on each other's trade and investment regimes. Negotiation over specific items to include in the FTA, and the initial drafting of some elements of text, will commence in 2006. No timeframe has been set for the completion of the agreement.