

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2004-2005 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome 3
Output Group: 3.3 – Support for the Australian education and training export industry and international relationships.

DEST Question No. E785_05

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Refers to DEST Question No. E146_05.

Question:

- A Will submissions to the Australia-China FTA Feasibility Study be publicly available? When? When is the closing date for submissions?
- B What are the terms of reference for the study?
- C What is the timetable? When will it report? Will the report be publicly available? If not, why not?

Answer:

China FTA Study Taskforce and consultation

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has provided the following response.

A

(1) Submissions to the joint Australia-China FTA Feasibility Study will be made publicly available if the Australian and Chinese Governments agree to publish the joint FTA feasibility study and if the person or organisation lodging the submission has agreed to its publication.

(2) Submissions will be made publicly available on the DFAT website following agreement by the Australian and Chinese governments to release the FTA feasibility study.

(3) The initial closing date for submissions was 18 June 2004, however submissions will still be accepted until the completion of the study at the end of March 2005.

B

The terms of reference for the joint FTA feasibility study are found at Annex II of the Australia-China Trade and Economic Framework (signed on 24 October 2003), and are shown below:

ANNEX II

The joint feasibility study into a bilateral Free Trade Agreement negotiation will be conducted with the following terms of reference:

- to provide an overview of recent trends in bilateral trade and economic relations;
- to assess recent international trade policy developments and the possible implications for Australia-China trade and investment;
- to identify and describe existing barriers to trade and investment flows, covering goods, services and investment and other issues that might be addressed in a free trade agreement;
- to identify possible cooperation measures to promote trade and investment liberalisation and facilitation between Australia and China;
- to assess the impact of the removal and/or reduction of existing barriers to goods and services trade and investment; and
- make conclusions and recommendations as regards options for future action.

C

(1) The initial timetable for the joint FTA feasibility study was to complete it by 31 October 2005.

(2) Good progress has enabled the completion date to be brought forward to end March 2005.

(3) The study is a decision-making document for the use of both the Australian and Chinese governments. Release of the study will be subject to the agreement of both governments.

(4) N/A