AUSFTA – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are the benefits of the AUSFTA for Australia?

The Agreement will immediately extend Australia's trade relationship with the world's largest merchandise and services exporter and importer. It will deliver real benefits and opportunities for Australian exporters from the day it comes into force, and the dynamic gains from the Agreement promise to yield enormous long-term benefits to the Australian economy.

More than 97 per cent of United States tariff lines on Australia's non-agricultural exports (excluding textiles and clothing) will be duty free from day one of the Agreement. Industry sectors that will particularly benefit include autos, metals, minerals, seafood, paper and chemicals. All trade in non-agricultural goods will be duty free by 2015, ensuring Australia's competitiveness against other suppliers from Canada, Mexico and other countries which enjoy preferential access to the US market. As a result of the Agreement Australia will gain immediate access to the $200 billion market in US federal government purchases of goods and services.

On agriculture, the Agreement gives Australian producers a significant boost in the US market. Two thirds of all agricultural tariffs, including on lamb, sheep meat and a range of horticultural products, will be eliminated immediately, and a further 9 per cent cut to zero within four years. Australia's beef and dairy producers will gain significantly improved access to the United States market.

The Agreement offers strong legal protections to underpin services trade and Australian investment in the United States, principally through a US commitment not to discriminate against Australian firms. The Agreement therefore ensures that Australian companies can compete on equal terms with US companies in the biggest services economy in the world. The Agreement will also improve our access to US innovation, which drives the global information economy and the information age.

The Agreement is a balanced set of undertakings between two of the most sophisticated and open economies. Reaching agreement meant that the Australian government was not able to advance some of our industry interests to the extent we hoped. The outcome on sugar was a particular disappointment in this regard. Similarly, compromises were made by the

United States that affected their preferred outcomes, allowing Australia to protect critical elements of public policy where we are recognised as having international best practice. This includes our quarantine regime, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and the right to ensure local content in Australian broadcasting and audiovisual services.

Has the Government commissioned independent economic modelling of the benefits of the AUSFTA?

A Centre for International Economics study, commissioned by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, on the impact of the Australia-United States Free Trade Agreement has confirmed it will deliver substantial benefits to Australia.

According to the CIE's modelling, Australia's annual GDP could be up by around $6 billion (about 0.7 per cent of GDP) as a result of the AUSFTA a decade after the Agreement's entry into force. Total GDP increase over 20 years is expected to amount to almost $60 billion in today's dollars.

Much of this growth will be generated by the dynamic gains expected from the deeper links the Agreement establishes between Australia and the US, with the CIE finding investment liberalisation the biggest contributor to the projected increase in Australia's GDP. But even if these benefits and other "dynamic" effects of trade liberalisation are excluded, liberalisation of trade in goods and services alone would contribute about $1 billion to real GDP.

The study expects the AUSFTA to bring about strong growth in two-way trade. Australia's exports to the US are predicted to increase by more than $3 billion annually. Beef and dairy exports are expected to expand as a result of the access gains negotiated, and big increases in exports of automobiles and parts are predicted.

The CIE study shows all major sectors of the economy and all States and Territories gaining. Parts of rural and regional Australia - for example, dairy producing and processing areas in Victoria, Tasmania and other states - will benefit strongly.

The industry case studies in the report show the FTA could also yield significant benefits not captured fully by modelling. These include frameworks for regulatory harmonisation in financial services and the removal of tariff peaks for light metals such as magnesium and titanium.

Less quantifiable benefits include greater certainty for Australian investors and service providers in the US, possible further integration in standards and mutual recognitions, and protecting Australia's competitive position as other countries negotiate FTAs with the US.

The CIE was commissioned to undertake the study by DFAT in March 2004 to provide an independent assessment of the impact of the AUSFTA on Australia and to assist public discussion and the work of the Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Treaties.

The CIE study is a detailed economic analysis, which uses two highly sophisticated models to attempt to measure the complex and comprehensive outcomes of the AUSFTA. While modelling has its limitations and, as the CIE itself acknowledges, some of the sectoral results, in particular, should be regarded with caution, the overwhelming outcome of the modelling work is that the AUSFTA delivers significant gains to Australia and will lift economic growth and welfare.

Does AUSFTA offer real benefits for Australian agriculture?

Yes. AUSFTA will give Australian agriculture a significant boost into the US market - 66% of all agricultural tariffs will be eliminated immediately, and a further 9% within four years.

For dairy products, our quota access immediately increases nearly threefold in volume, with ongoing growth in the quota at an average 5 per cent. This increase is across the board for all categories of dairy products, and should be worth US$41 million of additional exports in the first year. Moreover, the agreement grants access for some dairy products where Australia has been previously excluded from the US market, such as cheeses, butter, milk, cream and ice-cream products.

On beef, AUSFTA provides greater access for Australia's number one export to the United States. In-quota tariffs will be eliminated immediately, and over-quota duties will be phased out from years 9 to 18 of the Agreement. In addition, Australia will gain an 18.5 per cent increase in quota volumes over 18 years, valued at $245 million in the final year at current prices.

The elimination of tariffs will mean that sectors such as horticulture can look to the US market as a serious commercial prospect. Horticulture is a fast growing export industry and will benefit from new access opportunities to the US market. Products that will benefit include avocadoes, peanuts, oranges, mangoes, mandarins, fresh tomatoes, cut flowers, macadamias and other nuts.

The bulk of our lamb and sheep meat exports will benefit from immediate tariff-free access, clearing the way for continued success in a market where Australian producers see great prospects.

This deal also ensures that Australia exporters to the US do not lose market share to other countries queuing up to do FTAs deal with the US, and brings our comparative access into line with countries that already have FTA with the US. For example, in the absence of AUSFTA, exports of Australian wine to the US would be disadvantaged compared to Chilean wines as tariffs faced by the latter will be phased out under the Chile-US FTA. Canadian and Mexican exports to the US now face zero tariffs on most products. Beef from Argentina and Brazil could well benefit from better access to the US under the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas.

Why was sugar left out of the deal?

Australia's sugar access to the United States remains unchanged at 87,402 tonnes per annum. The government fought hard to increase this quota during the negotiations. This was a sensitive issue for the United States, however, and it did not prove possible for the United States to offer to increase current access. Faced with a decision of whether to walk away from the FTA, the Government decided that the potential benefits from AUSFTA as a whole did not justify denying those benefits to the rest of the Australian community for the sake of one – albeit very important – agricultural sub-sector.

The Government preserved Australia’s single desk arrangements for sugar exports in the negotiations and will continue to pursue trade reform for the sugar industry in the World Trade Organisation. Moreover, the Government has announced a substantial package of measures to assist the industry in the current difficult circumstances.

Will the FTA affect Australia’s quarantine regime?

The integrity of Australia’s quarantine regime and our right to protect animal, plant and human health will not be affected. Decisions on matters affecting quarantine will continue to be based on science. Moreover, quarantine disputes are exempted from the dispute mechanism established under the agreement.

The establishment of a Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Matters under AUSFTA and a Standing Working Group on Animal and Plant Health reflects an approach common to many bilateral agreements in providing a forum for discussing specific trade-related issues. Because Australia and the United States enjoy a significant trading relationship in agricultural products, it is likely that there will, at any point in time, be an agenda of market access issues for which quarantine risk assessments are underway or pending, and which may benefit from scientific and technical discussion.

The Working Group builds on the cooperative relationship that already exists between the Australian and United States agencies with major responsibility for technical market access issues relating to animal and plant health (Biosecurity Australia and the US Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)). Its stated objective is to resolve specific bilateral animal and plant health matters with a view to facilitating trade and, where possible, achieving consensus on scientific issues. This does not necessarily mean that it will be possible to reach scientific consensus in every instance.

Does the FTA abolish or weaken Australian agricultural 'single desks'?

No. Australia's single-desk arrangements for marketing Australian commodities to the world, such as for sugar, rice, wheat and barley, will not be affected by the AUSFTA.

Why does it take 18 years to eliminate the US quota on beef?

The 18-year timeframe for tariff elimination reflects the fact that beef is a sensitive industry in the United States. Nevertheless, during this period Australian beef producers will enjoy additional and growing duty free access into the US from year 3 of the agreement, in addition to our already large existing quota. (Beef exports are, in fact, Australia's largest single export by value to the United States).

Australia's existing annual beef quota to the US is 378,214 tonnes. The in-quota tariff on this tonnage is US4.4c/kg. There is a 26.40% out-of-quota tariff for any imports over this quota. Under the agreement the US4.4c/kg in-quota tariff will be immediately eliminated meaning that 378,214 tonnes of beef may be imported free of tariff - the removal of the in-quota tariff alone will mean increased returns to the Australian beef industry of around $20 million annually. The out-of-quota tariff will be phased down to zero over 18 years, beginning in year 9. At the same time the volume of the quota will be expanded over 18 years, from an additional 20,000 tonnes in year 3 to an additional 70,000 tonnes in year 18 (or a total of 448,214 tonnes in year 18, including the existing annual quota).

Will AUSFTA FTA affect Australian labelling requirements for genetically modified (GM) foods?

No. Australian labelling requirements for GM foods are not affected by the FTA.

Does the FTA tarnish Australia's credentials in promoting free agricultural trade?

AUSFTA in no way diminishes Australia's commitment to agricultural trade reform, nor does it diminish our credentials as an advocate for global reform. Indeed, the FTA serves to highlight that the only way to address agriculture subsidies in the US, the EU and other countries is through the WTO as part of a global agreement on agriculture reform under the Doha round. For this reason, the WTO continues to be Australia's highest trade policy priority and Australia will remain an influential player in the WTO agriculture negotiations, including through our ongoing leadership of the Cairns Group.

Is the FTA compatible with Australian obligations under the WTO?

AUSFTA complies with the requirements for FTAs set out in Article XXIV of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). A key requirement is that tariffs be removed on "substantially all the trade" in goods between FTA partners. In this regard, under the AUSFTA, Australian and US tariffs on all non-agricultural products will be eliminated within 10 years of entry into force. The AUSFTA also amply meets Article XXIV requirements with regard to agricultural products: all the limited Australian tariffs on US agricultural products will be removed from day one, while all United States tariffs on agricultural products imported from Australia will be eliminated over time, with only two exceptions (dairy and sugar). However, the Agreement does provide for a significant increase in the volumes of duty free quota access for dairy products, and Australia will continue to have access to the US market for sugar under WTO arrangements. By contrast, many existing FTA's would not meet the standards set by the AUSFTA. A further requirement of GATT Article XXIV is that a free trade agreement should not raise barriers against third parties to the Australian or US markets. The AUSFTA complies with this. AUSFTA also complies with standards under the WTO General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) through its substantial coverage in the services sector. Moreover, the AUSFTA achieves 'WTO plus' standards by extending its scope beyond traditional FTAs to include provisions on investment, competition policy, consumer protection, government procurement, intellectual property and e-commerce.

Will AUSFTA increase the cost of medicines under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS)?

No. The price of prescription medicines will not increase as a result of AUSFTA. Access by Australians to affordable medicines and the long term sustainability of the PBS will not be affected by the Agreement. Australians will benefit from faster access to subsidies for new prescription medicines.

Will the FTA undermine government control of the PBS system?

No. The Government has delivered on its commitment that the FTA would only lead to changes in PBS processes. As a result of AUSFTA more information will be made publicly available about the reasons for recommendations by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) to add medicines to the PBS. Also, a 'review' mechanism for medicines that have been rejected for listing on the PBS will be established. However, the review will not have the power to override the authority of the PBAC as the recommending body or of the Health Minister as the final decision-maker. Nor will it have the capacity to compromise the scientific integrity and independence of the PBAC.

Will the FTA allow (foreign) private companies to challenge the Australian Government?

No. The dispute settlement mechanism established under the agreement only allows the Parties, that is, the two governments, to initiate dispute settlement procedures if they believe the other Party is not complying with its obligations under the Agreement. Unlike many FTAs and other agreements covering investment, AUSFTA does not include provision for "Investor-State Dispute Settlement". This outcome recognises the fact that both countries have robust and sophisticated domestic legal systems that provide adequate scope for investors, both domestic and foreign, to pursue concerns about government actions.

Will Australia still be able to screen foreign investments?

Yes. The Government has retained the right to examine significant foreign investment proposals in all sectors to ensure they are in the national interest. Foreign investment in urban land (including residential properties) and in existing media businesses will continue to be screened regardless of value. Foreign investment in existing businesses in the telecommunication, transport and defence-related sectors will be screened if above $A50 million. All other foreign investment in existing businesses in non-sensitive sectors will still be screened if above $A800 million. In addition, all existing foreign investment limits relating to the media, Telstra, CSL, Qantas, and other Australian international airlines, federal leased airports and shipping have been preserved.

Will the FTA damage the Australian TV and film industry?

No. The agreement ensures there can be Australian voices and stories on audiovisual and broadcasting services now and in the future. Reservations to the chapters on Cross-Border Trade in Services and Investment allow Australia to maintain existing requirements for Australian content in both existing and new forms of media, whether analogue or digital, including in relation to free-to-air commercial TV, subscription TV, radio broadcasting, and subsidies (such as taxation concessions) for investment in Australian film and television production.

Under the Agreement, the existing requirement that drama channels on subscription TV allocate 10% of their program expenditure to Australian content may be increased up to 20%. Furthermore, Australia will be able to introduce new expenditure requirements of up to 10% in the following additional formats: the arts, children's, documentary and educational.

The reservations also ensure that Australia maintains sufficient freedom to introduce new or additional local content requirements in the future in relation to possible digital multichannelling on free-to-air commercial TV and on interactive audio and/or video services.

Finally, nothing in the Agreement will affect in any way the Government's right to support the cultural sector through the allocation of public funding. Nor will it affect public broadcasting via the ABC or SBS, including the amount of Australian programming on their channels.

A background paper on audiovisual local content provisions in AUSFTA, providing a more detailed explanation, can be found at
http://www.dfat.gov.au/trade/negotiations/us_fta/backgrounder/audiovisual.html

How does AUSFTA affect public services (eg Australia Post), state and territory government programs (subsidies)?

There is nothing in AUSFTA that would undermine the right of governments to adopt appropriate regulations that are in the public interest, for example, to achieve health, safety or environmental objectives. Nor does it require the privatisation of government services. Public services provided in the exercise of governmental authority will also be excluded from the scope of the services chapter.

Will the AUSFTA prevent State and governments from effectively managing water resources?

There is nothing in AUSFTA that would undermine the right of governments, at any level, to adopt measures for the management of water or for the sustainable management of any other natural resource. There is no obligation to privatise such services, nor anything in AUSFTA inhibiting proper regulation of water services for health or environmental reasons. AUSFTA would require any company with monopoly rights to supply a particular service, such as water, in a particular market to treat companies from the other country on a non-discriminatory basis, and that it should not abuse its monopoly position. That is fully consistent with the approach taken in Australia's current legislation, e.g. under the Trade Practices Act.

How will the FTA affect indigenous Australians?

Nothing in the agreement will adversely affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Policies giving preferences to indigenous persons or organisations are carved-out from the obligations of the chapters on Cross-Border Trade in Services and Investment. Moreover, the chapter on Government Procurement does not apply to measures adopted by the Parties for the health and welfare of indigenous people, and their economic and social advancement. AUSFTA includes a general exception for measures imposed for the protection of national treasures of artistic, historic and archaeological value.

Does AUSFTA address problems in obtaining recognition of professional qualifications in the US?

Acknowledging that recognition and licensing procedures can hinder the export of professional services, the agreement establishes a program to look at ways to promote the mutual recognition of qualifications and other issues of interest to providers of professional services. The Government will be working with professional bodies to indentify sectors in which such mutual recognition agreements would be beneficial. At the same time, AUSFTA does not in any way diminish the ability of governments and their competent authorities to maintain rules with regard to the recognition of qualifications and the licensing of overseas-trained professionals.

Does AUSFTA improve arrangements for business people to visit or work in the US?

Nothing in the agreement will affect the Parties' respective immigration regimes. Australia and the United States already maintain relatively open regimes with respect to entry of each others' business persons.

The Australian Government did pursue outcomes in the AUSFTA negotiations that would further facilitate the conditions for the temporary entry of Australian business persons and professionals to the US. While it did not prove possible to include a chapter on temporary entry in the AUSFTA, there was recognition by both countries that liberal temporary entry arrangements are important if we are to benefit fully from the commitments contained in the FTA. Australia and the US therefore agreed to look at issues related to the temporary entry of business persons as part of a separate, but parallel, process to the AUSFTA. This will provide an opportunity to pursue issues of concern to Australia about temporary entry into the United States.

Will the copyright clauses of the FTA harm Australian artists and musicians?

No. The FTA simply aligns our copyright term more closely with the United States, the European Union and a number of other trading partners. Our creative sectors will benefit through increased rewards for the work they create.

How will FTA provisions affect Australian government procurement arrangements such as "buy local" policies?

Under AUSFTA neither country may apply local preference arrangements, including price preferences, for procurements to which the government procurement chapter applies. In Australia these cover all Australian Government (Commonwealth) central departments plus a range of agencies, statutory authorities and government authorities. The question of State and Territory Government participation in the Government Procurement chapter has still to be settled.

The FTA specifically bans offsets, defined broadly to cover any requirement built into a procurement for such things as local content, technology transfer or export performance. However, this ban is subject to a number of significant exclusions, in particular policies that assist small and medium enterprises, overseas development assistance, and procurement of research and development services. For Australia, there are also exclusions for programs assisting indigenous people; defence procurement; procurement of motor vehicles; blood plasma fractionation; and government advertising.

The government procurement arrangements only apply to tenders above specified threshold levels (adjustable for inflation). Separate thresholds exist for Federal government departments and agencies, independent government authorities and (subject to inclusion) State Government departments and agencies. For the Australian (Federal) Government the thresholds are $A81,800 for goods and services with the exception of construction services where the threshold is $A9,396,000.

The ban on offsets will require modification to the Australian Endorsed Government Supplier Arrangement assessment procedure and to general Australian Government policies such as the Model Industry Development Criteria (which currently may apply to contracts of $5 million or more).

Does an Australian company have to have a branch in the US to tender for US government business?

No. The agreement will mean that Australia becomes a "designated" country thereby allowing US federal agencies to consider offers of Australian manufactured goods and services. At present, Australian companies must operate in the US or in a designated country to be considered.

Will an FTA with the US hurt our relations with Asia-Pacific countries?

The AUSFTA does not detract from the high priority the Government accords to trade relations with Asia. This is demonstrated by the recent conclusion of comprehensive FTAs with Singapore and Thailand, the recently signed Australia-Japan Trade and Economic Framework, the Closer Economic Partnership we are developing between the Association of South-East Asia Nations (ASEAN) and Australia and New Zealand. Australia and China are also undertaking a study into the feasibility of a bilateral FTA. Australia continues to play an active role in multilateral regional fora, including APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and the Asian Development Bank.

The US is an important economic partner for most Asian countries. Many Asian countries are themselves involved in FTA discussions with the US. Singapore has recently signed an FTA with the US and Thailand and the US have announced bilateral FTA negotiations. Under the Enterprise for ASEAN framework announced in October 2002, the US and individual ASEAN countries will jointly determine if and when they are ready to launch FTA negotiations and individual ASEAN countries will jointly determine if and when they are ready to launch FTA negotiations.

Australia's FTA with the US is only one of over 40 FTA initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region that have been proposed or explored publicly since 1997. Around half of these, including a number involving the US, were announced well before Australia started exploring this proposal with the Bush

Administration in early 2001. Asian governments have not raised AUSFTA as a point of concern with Australia.

How widely did the Government consult stakeholders about the FTA?

Australia's positions in the negotiations were developed through consultation with State and Territory Governments, business and professional groups, non-government organisations and the general public. In November 2002 the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) invited public submissions on Australia's approach to the negotiations. The Government received some 200 submissions from a wide range of organisations and individuals which helped to inform the development of the Government's negotiating objectives. During the course of the negotiations, Ministers and the negotiating team met with over 400 industry groups, professional organisations, businesses, state governments, consumer groups, unions and NGOs. State and Territory governments were consulted before and after each negotiating round and sent representatives as observers to a number of negotiating rounds.

How have Australian business and industry groups reacted to AUSFTA?

The conclusion of the FTA has been welcomed by the major peak business bodies and a wide range of sectoral industry associations.

The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry described AUSFTA as "a high quality agreement which benefits the whole Australian economy, including the manufacturing, services, agricultural, mining and investment sectors", and which "will give Australian business substantial new market access opportunities in one of the world's most dynamic and innovative economies."

The Business Council of Australia said the agreement "will provide massive opportunities for Australian companies of all sizes to gain access to the world's largest market."

The Chief Executive of Australian Industry Group, the manufacturing peak body stated that "we cannot underestimate the potential benefits of better access to our second largest export market after Japan and the primary source of Australia's foreign direct investment".

The Minerals Council said that the FTA "is just the fillip the Australian minerals industry was looking for from these trade negotiations".

While the National Farmers Federation, like the Government, is disappointed with the US' unwillingness to provide early open access for all of the agricultural sector, its President, Mr Peter Corish, has pointed out that the FTA achieves market access gains for a range of agricultural industries - including dairy, beef, horticulture, sheepmeat and wool.

The Australian Seafood Industry Council has said benefits of the deal will be felt right across the Australian seafood industry with the abolition of tariffs, and the industry is confident it will be able to boost its current exports into America, which are currently around $150 million a year.

How does AUSFTA interact with the North American Free Trade Agreement? Will Australia be importing cheap products from Mexico?

The AUSFTA rules of origin are designed to ensure that sufficient transformation of raw materials or inputs from third countries has occurred within the US or Australia to justify a claim that the good is a legitimate product of the US or of Australia. The rules of origin treat raw materials and inputs imported from either country's free trade partners under agreements such as NAFTA or CER exactly same way as raw materials or inputs from any other third countries. Transhipment of a product of Mexican or Canadian origin through the US to Australia will not qualify it for preferential treatment under AUSFTA.

Will the FTA relax Australian environmental and labour regulations?

No. In the FTA, Australia and the US recognise that it is inappropriate to encourage trade or investment by weakening or reducing the protections afforded in their respective environmental and labour laws. Under AUSFTA Australia retains the right to establish its own domestic environmental and labour standards, and to adapt or modify them.

Furthermore, in the agreement Australia and the US have agreed to explore ways to support ongoing bilateral, regional and multilateral activities, in particular in the negotiations in the WTO regarding the environment.

Will the Australian Parliament review the FTA?

The draft text of the Agreement has been tabled in both Houses of Parliament, and referred to the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties (JSCOT). JSCOT reviews all proposed treaty actions by Australia and, where appropriate, makes recommendations to the Government. JSCOT is holding public hearings and has called for public submissions on the FTA. Before the FTA can come into force, the Parliament would need to approve the legislation necessary for Australia to comply with the agreement, such as changes to the Customs Tariff Act.

When will AUSFTA be signed and when will it enter into force?

Once the Agreement has been signed (expected on 18 May, 2004) and both countries have completed necessary Parliamentary/Congressional processes, including passage of legislation necessary to give effect to the provisions of the agreement, the two governments can decide on a date for entry into force, which would occur 60 days after an exchange of diplomatic notes agreeing to enter the agreement into force. The target date for the agreement to enter into force is 1 January 2005.

Can I make a submission to the Government on AUSFTA?

The Government consulted extensively prior to, and during, the negotiations, including by inviting public submissions. It has decided that it should proceed to sign the draft treaty as negotiated with the US, which it considers to be strongly in the national interest. The key focus for public scrutiny and review is now in the Parliament. As noted above, the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties (JSCOT) has invited public submission on the AUSFTA by 13 April 2004. Public Hearings in State and Territory Capitals have been scheduled from 19 April to 14 May. Details are on the JSCOT website at www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct

Can I obtain a hard copy of the text of the Agreement?

The draft text of the AUSFTA has been posted on the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website (www.dfat.gov.au/trade/negotiations), along with a Guide to the Agreement, fact sheets on the main sectors and issues in the Agreement, papers on specific aspects of the Agreement, and the Centre for International Economics (CIE) Report on the Agreement (released 30 April) . However, there are no arrangements for printing and distributing hard copies of the treaty, taking particular account of the size of the full document (around 1000 pages). The public release of the draft treaty in advance of the signing of the final text is a departure from Australia's normal practice with treaties.

Once the Agreement has been signed, it will be available (in electronic form) in the Australian Treaties Library at www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/dfat. Most public libraries have Internet access facilities which may assist people without internet access.