

Introduction

Purpose of the report

- 1.1 This Report contains advice to Parliament on the review by the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties of the *Agreement for Establishment of the Global Crop Diversity Trust* (Rome on 1 April 2004) tabled in Parliament on 28 March 2006.¹

Background

- 1.2 On 6 April 2006, the Hon Alexander Downer MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs informed the Committee that Australia was seeking to secure a position on the Executive Board of the Global Crop Diversity Trust (Executive Board).²
- 1.3 The Minister stated that Australia's position on the Executive Board would ensure appropriate consideration of Australia's interests. Further the Committee was informed that Australia's campaign to secure a position on the Executive Board would be strengthened if it could become party to the Trust Agreement at the time of the Executive Board's first meeting. The Committee received evidence that the Board's first meeting is scheduled to take place from 12 to 15 June 2006.

1 Australia, House of Representatives 2004-05-06, *Votes and Proceedings*, No. 91, p. 1026; Senate 2004-06, *Journal*, No. 77, p. 1993.

2 Minister for Foreign Affairs, *Submission 1*.

- 1.4 To allow Australia to seek a position on the Executive Board, the Committee has treated review of this treaty as urgent, even though under the 20 sitting day inquiry period provision for this treaty action, the Committee would not be required to table its report until mid August 2006.

Briefing documents

- 1.5 The advice in this Report refers to the National Interest Analysis (NIA) prepared for the proposed treaty action. This document is prepared by the Government agency responsible for the administration of Australia's responsibilities under the treaty. Copies of the NIA may be obtained from the Committee Secretariat or accessed through the Committee's website at:

www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/28march2006/tor.htm

- 1.6 Copies of the 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

- 1.7 The review contained in this Report was advertised in the national press and on the Committee's website.³ Letters were also sent inviting comment from all State Premiers, Chief Ministers, Presiding Members of Parliament and from individuals who have expressed an interest in being kept informed of proposed treaty actions such as this. A list of submissions received and their authors is at Appendix A.
- 1.8 The Committee also received evidence at a public hearing held on 8 May 2006. A list of witnesses who appeared before the Committee at this public hearing is at Appendix B. A transcript of evidence from the

3 The Committee's review of the proposed treaty action was advertised in *The Australian* on 5 and 19 April 2006. Members of the public were advised on how to obtain relevant information and invited to submit their views to the Committee, both in the advertisement and via the Committee's website.

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www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/28march2006/hearings.htm

