Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee

Budget Estimates 2009–2010; 1 and 2 June 2009

Answers to questions on notice from **Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

Question 1

Program 1.1

Topic: ASEAN FTA and Malaysian tariffs

Question in writing

Senator Abetz asked:

A. Is it correct that Malaysia currently imposes a 25 percent customs duty and 10 percent sales tax on imported manufactured ferrous products and die cast cathodes and similar products?

B. Does the ASEAN FTA apply to Malaysia?

C. If so, will the above mentioned duties and taxes be removed as part of the ASEAN FTA? If so, when?

D. What is the impact of this agreement on tariffs and duties for Australia's manufacturers seeking to export into South East Asia?

Answer

A. Without details of the specific products and their relevant tariff classifications it is not possible to confirm the tariff applied by Malaysia. However, we note that Malaysia's tariffs on imported manufactured ferrous products range from zero to 50 per cent, with the majority of tariffs between zero and 30 per cent. In relation to articles of aluminium, zinc, and other base metals, from which die cast cathodes are typically made, tariffs range from zero to 25 per cent. Malaysia also levies a sales tax and publicly available information indicates that it is quite likely that the rate that applies to these types of products is 10 per cent.

B. Yes, Malaysia as a member of ASEAN is a signatory to the Agreement Establishing the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA).

C. It is not possible to confirm the exact tariff outcomes under AANZFTA without detail of the particular items and their tariff classification. However, under Malaysia's tariff schedule to AANZFTA, current zero tariffs on some manufactured ferrous products and articles of aluminium, zinc and other base metals will be bound at zero on entry into force (EIF) of the Agreement (expected to be no later than 1 January 2010). However, other current tariffs on these products, which range up to 50 per cent, will be phased down and eliminated by 2012 or 2013. AANZFTA does not provide for the elimination of sales tax, or similar internal taxes, in Malaysia or other AANZFTA Parties, including Australia. Instead, the Agreement incorporates relevant World Trade Organization rules providing that such internal taxes must be applied in a manner that does not discriminate against imported products.

D. The AANZFTA agreement binds ASEAN tariffs at the base rate applying on 1 January 2005 and provides for almost all of these tariffs to be reduced and in most cases eliminated. Over time, the key ASEAN markets of Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines and Vietnam will eliminate tariffs on between 90 and 100 per cent of tariff lines, covering 96 per cent of current Australian exports to the region. Singapore will bind all tariffs at zero from EIF of the Agreement. While full tariff elimination could not be achieved for all products and all countries, there will be significant liberalisation for all manufacturing sectors. For example:

- **For machinery and mechanical appliances, and parts**, tariffs on the majority of tariff lines will be bound at zero on EIF or phased to zero by 2012, with most of the other lines phased to zero by 2020, and remaining lines phased to 5 per cent or less, except for a few lines excluded from tariff commitments in Indonesia;

- **For electrical machinery and equipment, and parts,** tariffs on almost all tariff lines will phase to zero, with remaining tariffs generally reducing to 5 per cent or less;

- **For instruments and apparatus (including optical, photographic, measuring and medical),** tariffs on all lines will be bound at zero on EIF or phased to zero;

- **For textiles, clothing and footwear,** tariffs on all lines will be phased to zero in Malaysia, and in other countries on all lines with the following exceptions: in Indonesia—12 textile and 77 clothing lines that phase to 5 per cent; in the Philippines—8 textile lines that phase to 12 per cent or 15 per cent and 11 footwear tariffs that phase to 5 per cent; in Vietnam—5 lines that are excluded from tariff commitments;

- **For pharmaceutical products,** tariffs on all tariff lines will be bound at zero on EIF or phased to zero except for 1 tariff line (waste pharmaceuticals) excluded from tariff commitments by Indonesia and Vietnam, and 3 lines phased to 5 per cent in Vietnam;

- **For automotive parts and components,** tariffs will be phased to zero on almost all tariff lines, with the remaining lines generally phased to 5%, and with most tariffs eliminated or in the 0-5 per cent range as early as 2013 (or, in Vietnam, 2018).

In addition to the direct benefits of tariff reduction and elimination in these and other sectors, Australian exporters will be able to expand exports to the region by tapping into global supply chains through the agreement's regional rules of origin.

Question 2

Program 1.1

Topic: UNSC Candidacy

Question in writing

Senator Brandis asked:

In relation to Australia's candidacy for a seat on the United Nations Security Council, has the Government been in contact with Botswana, Kenya, Tanzania and Namibia?

Answer: Yes.

Question 3

Program 1.1

Topic: West Papua

Question in writing

Senator Hanson-Young asked:

A. Has the Government made representations to protect press freedom, both Indonesian and foreign, in Papua? If so, to what extent?

B. What measures is the Australian Government taking to encourage the political situation in West Papua is open, fair and accurately reported in the media (both Indonesian and Foreign)?

C. Given the Rudd government's recent statement of support for the UN Charter on Indigenous Rights, what plans, if any, does it have to promote the rights of West Papuans?

D. According to a 2006 newspoll, 76.7% of Australians are sympathetic towards the West Papuan people and their efforts for self-determination, what is the Government's position on this, and have representations been made to the Indonesian Government?

E. The ongoing stated position of the Government in relation to West Papuan's desire for self determination is to support the Implementation of Special Autonomy. Given the Rudd Government continues to invest significant aid in to this, please explain all measures that are in place to measure the effectiveness of Special Autonomy?

F. What evidence does the Australian government have that Special Autonomy is successfully working?

G. What specific measures have been undertaken by the Government in relation to ongoing allegations of torture and mistreatment of political prisoners in West Papua?

H. Given Australia has recently become a signatory to the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture, and indicated that it will introduce torture legislation into

Parliament, making it a federal offence, will the Government send a strong message about the unacceptability of torture to the Indonesian Government, and what guarantees will be sought to ensure torture is stopped?

I. Would Australia consider any future sanction on Indonesia if it refused to cease certain practices that contravene the Optional Protocol?

J. Are there any DFAT officials based in PNG in charge of looking over long-term visa requests to enter Papua New Guinea from Australian citizens? If so, why?

Answer

A. The Australian Government has raised regularly with Indonesian authorities the importance of access to Papua and West Papua provinces for credible observers, including journalists with appropriate visas. This, in our view, is the best way to ensure transparency and promote greater balance in international understanding of actual conditions in the Papuan provinces.

B. The process of media access to the Papua and West Papua provinces is a matter for the Indonesian Government. The Australian Government continues to raise with Indonesia the importance of access to the two Papua provinces for credible observers, including by foreign journalists with appropriate visas. Foreign journalists have been allowed to visit the two Papua provinces, but must seek permission first.

C. Australia has a strong track record of making representations urging the Indonesian Government to investigate all alleged human rights abuses and ensure the human rights of all Indonesians are respected. The Foreign Minister and Embassy officials in Jakarta continue to raise concerns over the situation in Papua and West Papua provinces, as warranted, with relevant authorities.

D. Australia strongly supports the development of Papua and West Papua provinces as stable and prosperous parts of the Republic of Indonesia–which we believe is best achieved through the implementation of Special Autonomy and respect for human rights. Australia does not support separatism–we respect Indonesia's territorial integrity, including its sovereignty over Papua and West Papua.

E. The implementation of the Special Autonomy Law is a matter for the Indonesian Government. At the invitation of the Indonesian Government, the Australian Government has worked to increase development assistance in the Papua and West Papua provinces in recent years. Australia’s development assistance program in the two provinces has increased from $10.9 million in 2007-08 to an estimated $13 million in 2008-09, focusing on health, HIV/AIDS prevention and local government capacity building. This assistance is determined following extensive consultations with the Indonesian Government and local officials in the two provinces.

F. The implementation of the Special Autonomy Law is ongoing. The Australian Government welcomes President Yudhoyono’s commitment to implementing Special Autonomy and efforts to support the economic development of the two Papuan provinces. Special Autonomy remains the most appropriate means to address the legitimate needs of Papuans within the framework of Indonesian sovereignty.

G. Australia has a strong track record of making representations urging the Indonesian Government to investigate all alleged human rights abuses and ensure the human rights of all Indonesians are respected.

H. Australia has a strong track record of making representations urging the Indonesian Government to investigate all alleged human rights abuses and ensure the human rights of all Indonesians are respected.

I. It would not be appropriate for the Australian Government to speculate about what may or may not take place.

J. There are no DFAT officials based in Papua New Guinea (PNG) in charge of looking over long-term visa requests to enter PNG from Australian citizens.

Question 4

Program 1.1

Topic: West Papua

Question in writing

Senator Bob Brown asked:

A. Please detail any strategic concerns the department has about the Bin Laden group land clearance for oil palm and rice farming in West Papua up to and beyond the border with Papua New Guinea in Marind province (Merauke)?

B. Please outline any assistance the Australian Defence Forces or other Australian personnel have given to the PNG government to secure the border area in Marind province against illegal incursion.

C. Does the government have evidence of the involvement of Indonesian military officers in illegal logging in West Papua?

D. Please detail any strategic concerns the department has about the build-up of Indonesian military and militia personnel on the PNG–West Papua border.

Regarding reports that Indonesia continues to facilitate the migration of Indonesians from Java and other islands to West Papua:

E. Does the government believe there is any likelihood of tensions between West Papuans and Indonesian migrants building and erupting in a similar way to the situation in East Timor?

F. Has the government provided advice or any other assistance to Papua New Guinea about the building tension between West Papuans and Indonesian migrants on the West Papua–PNG border?

G. Does the government have any evidence to suggest that members of the Indonesian military are involved at any level in the fomenting of violence between Indonesian migrants and West Papuans?

H. Has the government helped establish or provided support for measures to promote peaceful co-existence between West Papuans and Indonesian migrants?

I. Explain in detail any government funding, grants, soft loans, personnel or equipment assistance which has been given to any aspect of Indonesians migration program to West Papua.

In relation to the Australian Government's soft loan and grant of AS$328 million to the Eastern Indonesia National Roads Improvement Program:

J. Who will administer the disbursement of this loan?

K. How will the government monitor the disbursement of the loan?

L. Can the government rule out any connection with the construction of these roads and legal or illegal logging?

M. Please detail the roads to be funded and their location.

Answer

A. Land management and commercial issues are matters for the respective Governments.

B. Through the Defence Cooperation Program, the Australian Government supports the development of a professional Papua New Guinean Defence Force (PNGDF) with improved capabilities in core areas such as border and maritime security. This includes funding bilateral exercises, training, infrastructure projects, the sustainment of Forward Operating Bases (FOBs), and PNGDF border patrols (rations and allowances) out of FOBs Vanimo and Kiunga. The specific deployment of PNGDF personnel within Papua New Guinea (PNG) is a matter for the PNG Government.

C. We are aware of media allegations of the involvement of Indonesian military officers in illegal logging in Indonesia's Papua and West Papua provinces, and welcome the Indonesian Government's initiative to curb illegal logging, including proposals presented under the Letter of Intent (LoI) on Forestry Co-operation at the Australia-Indonesia Forestry Taskforce meeting in February 2009.

D. The deployment of security forces within Indonesia is a matter for the Indonesian Government.

E. It would not be appropriate for the Australian Government to speculate about possible future social tensions in parts of Indonesia.

F. The Australian Government has not provided advice or any other assistance to PNG about the situation on the Indonesia–PNG border.

G. DFAT is not aware of any evidence to suggest that members of the Indonesian military are involved at any level in the fomenting of violence between indigenous Papuans and migrants from other parts of Indonesia.

H. No assistance has been given that directly helps to establish or support measures to promote peaceful co-existence between indigenous Papuans and other Indonesians in Papua.

I. – M. Responses to be provided separately by AusAID.

Question 5

Program 1.1

Topic: Hazara in Afghanistan and Pakistan

Question in writing

Senator Joyce asked:

A. How many Hazara people are living in Afghanistan?

B. How many of those are living in Hazarajad provinces?

C. How many live outside Hazarajad in Afghanistan?

D. How many Hazara already live in Pakistan?

E. Of those, how many live in Quetta?

Answer

A. There has been no recent census in Afghanistan and no conclusive figures are available. The population of Afghanistan is variously estimated at between 24 million and 33 million with Hazaras constituting an estimated 9-20 per cent, depending on the source.

B. There are no conclusive figures available to answer this question.

C. As with B, there are no conclusive figures available to answer this question.

D. There has been no recent census in Pakistan and hence no conclusive figures on the Hazara population are available.

E. As with D, there are no conclusive figures available to answer this question.

Question 6

Program 1.1

Topic: Staff with disabilities

Question in writing

Senator Boyce asked:

A. How many people with a disability were employed full-time and how many part-time? What classifications were these staff employed under?

B. What percentage of staff in the Department had a disability at March 30, 2008 and March 30, 2009?

C. What programs does the Department have to encourage the employment of people with a disability?

Answer

A. The department employs 32 full-time A-based employees with a disability (self disclosed). There are no part-time employees with a disability (self disclosed).

Of the 32 full time A-based employees with a disability, two are at posts and 30 are in Australia.

The classifications of the 32 are:

APS 1	Nil
APS 2	1
APS 3	1
APS 4	7
APS 5	4
APS 6	3
EL1	10
EL2	4
SES Band 1	1
SES Band 3	1

The department does not centrally collect disability information for LES as the employment and management of LES is devolved to posts. The Workplace Diversity and Occupational Health and Safety units assist posts with reasonable adjustments for LES with a disability, when requested.

B. As at 30 March 2008, the percentage of A-based staff in the department with a disability (self disclosed) was 1.3 per cent. As at 30 March 2009, percentage of A-based staff in the department with a disability (self disclosed) was 1.5 per cent.

C. The department's *Action Plan for Employing People with Disability 2007-2010*, launched in August 2007, aims to ensure we develop appropriately tailored individual employee programs focused on behaviours, attitudes, systems and knowledge; to successfully engage with people with disability as employees; and to implement proactive strategies to attract and retain talented people with a disability.

Question 7

Program 1.1

Topic: Staffing

Hansard 1 June, page 12

Senator Trood asked:

A. Would the department provide a list of the 40 specialist positions awaiting security clearances as at 1 June, and how long each of the recruits has been waiting for their security clearance?

Answer

A. 25 recruits to specialist positions are awaiting security clearances, as follows:

Specialist Position	Date the recruit should have returned the required documentation and for the clearance process to begin
BB2 Functions Officer	24/06/2009
BB2 Passport Eligibility Officer	13/10/2008*
BB2 Project Liaison Officer, VSO	8/04/2009
BB2 Project Liaison Officer, VSO	9/04/2009
BB2 Records Management Officer	15/07/2008**
BB2 Security Assessing Officer	9/07/2009
BB3 APS6 Legal Specialist	2/03/2009
BB3 APS6 Legal Specialist	2/03/2009
BB3 ASNO Safeguards Officer APS6	22/05/2009
BB3 Document Access Manager	15/05/2009
BB3 EL1 Information Technology Officer	24/02/2009
BB3 EL1 Information Technology Officer	26/02/2009
BB3 EL1 Information Technology Officer	26/02/2009
BB3 EL1 Information Technology Officer	3/03/2009
BB3 EL1 Information Technology Officer	4/02/2009
BB3 EL1 Senior Investigator	18/03/2009
BB3 eLearning Training Officer	27/04/2009
BB3 Legal Specialist	16/03/2009
BB3 Legal Specialist Round	12/02/2009
BB3 Legal Specialist Round 2007	13/5/2009***
BB3 Project Manager	14/04/2009
BB3 Technical Officer	13/07/2009

Specialist Position	Date the recruit should have returned the required documentation and for the clearance process to begin
EL1 Technical Officer	7/05/2009
EL1 Technical Officer	7/05/2009
EL1 Technical Officer	29/05/2009

*Recruit first sent documentation on 22/9/2008, resent 17/4/2009, and is yet to return documentation.
** Recruit first sent documentation on 24/6/2008 and clearance underway.
*** Recruit sent documentation on 4/6/2008 but did not return the documentation until 13/5/2009

15 recruits to specialist positions received security clearances between 1 June and 3 July, as follows*:

Specialist Position	Date the recruit should have returned the required documentation and for the clearance process to begin
BB2 Passport Eligibility Officer	23/04/2009
BB3 EL1 Information Technology Officer	17/2/2009
BB3 EL1 Information Technology Officer	24/02/2009
BB3 EL1 Information Technology Officer	24/02/2009
BB3 EL1 Information Technology Officer	27/01/2009
BB3 Legal Specialist Round	12/02/2009
BB3 Legal Specialist Round	28/1/2009
BB3 Legal Specialist Round	12/02/2009
BB3 Legal Specialist Round	13/02/2009
BB3 Legal Specialist Round 2007	25/06/2008*
BB3 Project Manager	14/04/2009
BB3 Project Manager	14/04/2009
BB3 Training Officer	27/11/2008
EL2 Medical Officer Class 4	25/02/2009
EL2 Staff Counsellor	24/04/2009

* Clearance received on 22/12/2008 but recruit is yet to start with the Department due to maternity leave

Question 8

Program 1.1

Topic: Australian diplomatic missions in Africa

Hansard 1 June, page 32

Senator Trood asked:

A. Would the department provide a consolidated list of Australia's missions in Africa and their diplomatic accreditations?

B. Which of these have assumed additional responsibilities following the establishment of diplomatic relations with a number of African countries since the beginning of 2008?

Answer

A. Australia has seven missions in Africa and one post in Europe with diplomatic accreditations to African countries.

Australian High Commission Abuja has diplomatic accreditation to Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Gabon and The Gambia.

Australian High Commission Accra has diplomatic accreditation to Ghana, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Senegal and Sierra Leone.

Australian Embassy Cairo has diplomatic accreditation to Egypt, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia and Libya (the Australian Consulate-General in Tripoli has consular responsibility for Libya).

Australian Embassy Harare has diplomatic accreditation to Zimbabwe, Angola, Malawi and Zambia.

Australian High Commission Nairobi has diplomatic accreditation to Kenya, Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda.

Australian High Commission Port Louis has diplomatic accreditation to Mauritius, Comoros, Madagascar and Seychelles.

Australian High Commission Pretoria has diplomatic accreditation to South Africa, Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia and Swaziland.

Australian Embassy Paris has diplomatic accreditation to Algeria, Mauritania and Morocco.

B. Since the beginning of 2008, Australia has accredited ambassadors to Burkina Faso, Liberia and Mali (from Accra), Burundi (from Nairobi), and Chad (from Abuja). These posts already had consular and bilateral liaison responsibilities for those countries. During this period diplomatic relations have been established with the Republic of the Congo, Niger, Sao Tome and Principe, Togo and Equatorial Guinea but ambassadors are yet to be accredited. Abuja currently has responsibility for the Republic of the Congo, Niger, Sao Tome and Principe, and Equatorial Guinea. Accra currently has responsibility for Togo.

Question 9

Program 1.1

Topic: Support for the Governor-General and relations with Burkina Faso and Niger

Hansard 1 June, page 33

Senator Johnston asked:

A. Regardless of whether they travelled with her or not, how many people did the government provide to assist with the Governor-General's travel to Africa?

B. What economic and cultural attachments does Australia have with Burkina Faso and Niger?

Answer

A. A number of areas of the Foreign Affairs and Trade portfolio assisted the Governor-General's visits to Africa. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Middle East and Africa Branch coordinated DFAT's support, with one EL2 employee dedicated to work on the visit from 27 January to 9 April, while AusAID's Africa Section provided briefing and coordinated support for components of the Governor-General's program related to aid and development.

Four posts in Africa supported the Governor-General's visit: Harare, Nairobi, Port Louis, and Pretoria. As is usual practice in supporting high-level visits, a number of the A-based and locally-based employees at these posts were involved, including the AusAID staff posted in Nairobi and Pretoria.

To support the resources of posts in handling a major visit of this type—including to countries of non-resident accreditation—the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade assigned a number of staff on short-term missions, to Harare, Pretoria, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Port Louis. AusAID assigned staff from Pretoria and Nairobi posts to support aid-related project visits in Zambia, Mozambique, Kenya, Namibia, Botswana, Ethiopia and Tanzania.

B. Australia's principal current and prospective interests in Burkina Faso and Niger relate to investment in and provision of services and equipment to the mining industry.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is aware of a number of Australian companies with zinc and gold mining and exploration projects in Burkina Faso. A number of other Australian companies have supplied services and equipment to mining projects in Burkina Faso in recent years.

Australia's merchandise exports to Burkina Faso were $2.7 million in 2008 and $6.9 million in 2007. Merchandise imports from Burkina Faso were less than $50,000 in each of the last two years. Mining services exports are often reflected in export data for other destinations, rather than as direct exports to Burkina Faso.

Australia also has common interests with Burkina Faso in achieving ambitious cotton trade liberalisation in the WTO Doha Round. Burkina Faso is a member of the "Cotton 4" group of West African countries playing an active role in those negotiations. A strong outcome on cotton will be important in demonstrating the development results of the Doha Round.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is aware of an Australian company with interests in uranium mining in Niger.

Australia's merchandise trade with Niger totalled $9.2 million in 2008 and $11.1 million in 2007, of which Australian exports comprised $2.0 million in 2008 and $3.0 million in 2007.

Australians have been involved in development projects in both countries.

Question 10

Program 1.1

Topic: Staffing—Hugh Borrowman

Hansard 1 June, pages 44 & 50

Senator Trood asked:

A. Why did Mr Hugh Borrowman finish working at the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet?

B. When did Mr Borrowman undertake Swedish language training at Uppsala University?

Answer

A. This question should be referred to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

B. Mr Borrowman received Swedish language tuition at the Uppsala University from July to August 1993.

Question 11

Program 1.1

Topic: Bali Summit and Strategic Intelligence Report

Hansard 1 June, page 72

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

A. How many people from DFAT attended the Bali Summit?

B. Was DFAT provided with a report entitled 'Strategic forecast for transnational criminal trends and threats', also referred to as a strategic intelligence report?

Answer

A. Six DFAT staff attended the Bali Regional Ministerial Conference from Canberra. Five DFAT staff attended from the Australian Embassy in Jakarta and two DFAT staff attended from the Consulate General in Bali.

B. DFAT has no record of having received the report entitled "Strategic forecast for transnational criminal trends and threats".

Question 12

Program 1.1

Topic: Durban II Conference

Hansard 1 June, pages 73-84

Senator Trood asked:

A. When was the date for the Durban II conference formally set?

B. When did Israel declare that is was not intending to participate in the Durban II conference?

C. When did DFAT become aware that Canada, Germany, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland and the United States were not intending to participate in the Durban II conference?

D. When did it come to the department's attention that the Human Rights Commission was interested in participating or intending to participate in the Durban II conference?

E. Did the department contact the Minister's office in relation to the four month delay in responding to the letter dated 25 July 2008 from the President of HREOC?

F. What happened as a consequence of the advice in HREOC's letter to the Minister dated 14 January 2009 that they intended to participate in the Durban II conference? Was the letter passed on to the department?

G. When and how was HREOC advised that Australia was going to boycott the Durban II conference?

H. What further correspondence or communication has taken place between the minister and HREOC since 19 April 2009?

I. Would the department provide a list of all the countries that attended the conference and identify those that walked out, at least during the speech by the President of Iran?

Answer

A. The date was set during the first substantive session of the Preparatory Commission, held in Geneva on 21 April–2 May 2008.

B. 19 November 2008.

C. Shortly before, on, or immediately after the dates of those countries' public announcement of withdrawal.

D. On receipt of the copy of the letter from the President of the Australian Human Rights Commission, dated 14 January 2009.

E. No.

F. The letter was passed on to the Department. The Department noted the contents of the letter.

G. The question was answered, FAD&T 84, 1 June.

H. The Department is not aware of any correspondence between the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the subject of the Durban Review Conference after 19 April 2009.

I. The following countries nominated representatives to the Durban Review Conference, according to the Report of the Credentials Committee:

Afghanistan, Albania**,** Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Holy See, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Rwanda, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Tanzania, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Vietnam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

According to media reporting, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, St Kitts and Nevis, Sweden, and the United Kingdom left the room during the Iranian President's speech.

Question 13

Program 1.1

Topic: Burma

Hansard 1 June, pages 95, 98, 101

Senator Ludlam asked:

A. Which officials from the Australian Embassy in Rangoon have participated in delegations making representations on behalf of Aung San Suu Kyi?

B. How many staff are employed in the mission in Rangoon?

C. Would the department have any role in informing either the Treasurer or the Foreign Investment Review Board about the activities of the China Nonferrous Metal Mining Company, which operates a nickel mine in Burma and has before the FIRB a proposal to become a majority shareholder in Lynas Corporation Limited, which has a mining project at Mt Weld in Western Australia?

D. Has the Ambassador to ASEAN, Ms Gillian Bird, been tasked specifically with lobbying ASEAN about Australia's human rights position?

Answer

A. In the period since Aung San Suu Kyi's arrest on 14 May 2009, the Australian Ambassador in Rangoon has made all representations on behalf of Aung San Suu Kyi. On one occasion she was accompanied by the Deputy Head of Mission.

B. At 30 June, eight A-based and 31 locally engaged staff (LES) were employed in the mission in Rangoon. This comprises staff representing DFAT, AFP, AusAID and DIAC.

C. DFAT, along with a range of departments and agencies, is routinely approached by Treasury seeking views on factors that may impact on the Foreign Investment Review Board's consideration of foreign investment proposals. In advising Treasury, DFAT examines factors which may impact on whether the proposal is in Australia's national interest.

D. At Ambassador Bird's meetings with representatives from the ASEAN Secretariat and member countries, she discusses a range of issues including relevant human rights matters, particularly the progress of ASEAN's proposed human rights body (a component of the recently signed ASEAN Charter).

Question 14

Program 1.1

Topic: Afghanistan elections

Hansard 1 June, pages 109, 110

Senator Johnston asked:

In relation to the forthcoming elections in Afghanistan, what are the gender statistics for voter registration?

Answer

According to the Afghan Independent Election Commission (IEC) approximately 4.5 million voters were registered during the voter registration update recently carried out in Afghanistan, and 39 per cent of those who registered were women. Approximately 11 million voters were registered for the 2004 Presidential election, and more than 41 per cent of these were women. A further 1.7 million Afghans registered to vote prior to the 2005 Wolesi Jirga (Lower House) and Provincial Council elections, and 44 per cent of these were women. The IEC is currently preparing an estimate of the total number of Afghans that are registered to vote in the 2009 elections but this estimate has not yet been finalised.

Question 15

Program 1.1

Topic: Holy See

Hansard 2 June, page 7, and in writing

Senator Trood asked:

A. Are there any upcoming events or activities for which Mr Fischer has been specifically tasked that relate to his duties as Ambassador to the Holy See?

B. What is the address of the new Australian Chancery serving Australia's representative interests to the Holy See?

C. What is the salary of the Ambassador to the Holy See?

D. What additional entitlements is he receiving?

E. What is the number and level of the staff currently serving and soon to serve in the Holy See?

F. What is their salary level?

Answer

A. Ambassador Fischer has been instructed to pursue vigorously Australia's foreign, trade and security objectives with the Vatican at senior levels.

Key activities undertaken or planned for the second half of 2009 include the following (the list only includes events and priorities known at the time of drafting—other priorities may emerge in due course):

- Preparation for and follow-up to Prime Minister Rudd's 9 July visit to the Holy See, including his private audience with the Pope and meeting with the Secretary of State.
- Assist with periodic visits by Australian Parliamentary delegations.
- Ongoing engagement with senior Vatican officials, including the Secretary of State, heads of other Vatican "ministries", heads of other missions, key leaders of global religious orders headquartered in Rome, as well as visiting Australian religious leaders. This engagement includes the following:
  - ongoing high-level advocacy of Australia's positions, as well as reporting on Vatican foreign policy with respect to the Asia-Pacific, development cooperation, human rights, Africa, the Middle East peace process, disarmament, international security challenges, religious freedom, international human rights concerns, UN reform and the impact of the global economic crisis
  - intensification of dialogue and advocacy of Australia's position on climate change in the lead-up to the Copenhagen Conference
  - continued cooperation with the Vatican and Asia Group of missions to the Holy See on Interfaith Dialogue. These efforts will peak around the visit of the President of Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue to Indonesia in second half of 2009, and the Parliament of World Religions in Melbourne in December 2009.
- Ongoing involvement in events promoting the importance of food security and economic reform. Ambassador Fischer will use these opportunities to advocate Australia's position on food security, trade liberalisation and financial system reform.
- In cooperation with the Global Crop Diversity Trust and Bioversity International, participation in a possible event on the role of biodiversity in food security and human nutrition, as well as agricultural development. The event may be linked to the Vatican Synod for Africa in October. (The Global Crop Diversity Trust and Bioversity International are headquartered in Rome.)

B. Negotiations are currently being conducted with the owner of a property on the Corso Vittorio Emanuele II for use as the new chancery for the Australian Embassy to the Holy See. The general location of the property is in the vicinity of the current Holy See chancery office. However, until the lease negotiations are concluded and a lease signed, the address of the property cannot be identified as that of the proposed new chancery. The address of the property will be in the public domain once a lease is signed.

C. Mr Fischer was appointed as an SES Band 2 officer with an annual salary of $172,900.

D. Mr Fischer receives the same entitlements as other DFAT employees serving overseas. This includes an allowance to reflect the different costs of living overseas and a fully acquittable representation allowance. Like other SES officers, Mr Fischer is entitled to participate in an executive vehicle scheme and is provided with an official mobile telephone.

E. At 30 June, five A-based and locally engaged employees were employed in the mission in the Holy See. No changes to the Holy See staffing are anticipated over the coming year. The staff levels are an Ambassador, a Counsellor and three locally engaged employees.

F. Details of the Ambassador's salary and entitlements are provided in responses C and D.

Other staff are paid at the salary appropriate to their level. Their total annual salary cost in Australian dollars is $269,393.

Question 16

Program 1.1

Topic: Tabling of bilateral treaty list

Hansard 2 June, page 18

Senator Ferguson asked:

Which of those countries affected by the tabling of a list of bilateral treaty negotiations were contacted by the Head of Mission and which were contacted by someone other than the Head of Mission?

Answer

The governments of the following countries were contacted by the Head of Mission including Charges d'Affaires:

Bangladesh, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Indonesia, Ireland, Kiribati, Kuwait, Mexico, Nauru, the Netherlands, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Russia, Spain.

The governments of the following countries were contacted by someone other than the Head of Mission, including by formal Third Person Note:

Algeria, Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Aruba, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, British Virgin Islands, Canada, Chile, China, Cook Islands, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, France, Germany, Grenada, Hong Kong, India, Iran, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Korea, Kosovo, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Montenegro, Netherlands Antilles, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Tonga, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Uruguay, USA, Vanuatu, Vietnam.

Madagascar was not contacted owing to political unrest at the time.

Question 17

Program 1.1

Topic: Daily Telegraph article: trade in forged passports

Hansard 2 June, page 29

Senator Trood asked:

Has the Passport Office investigated claims made in a *Daily Telegraph* article in March 2009, about forged passports and a trade in passports?

Answer

The Australian Passport Office has investigated the claims made in the *Daily Telegraph* article in March 2009. The Australian Passport Office has an active fraud investigation unit. Allegations of fraud are investigated and, where warranted, prosecuted. The *Daily Telegraph* article related to offers on the internet of fake identity documents including, among a number of others, Australian passports. It is not clear what, if anything, the person responding to the offer would receive and Australian Passport Office investigations confirmed the offer to be fraudulent. The offending website was referred to the Australian Federal Police.

Question 18

Program 1.1

Topic: China FTA

Hansard 2 June, page 101

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

A. In relation to the China FTA negotiations, what contractual difficulties do Australia's wool exporters face in terms of non-financial barriers?

B. What is the department doing and considering doing in relation to access for wool in the Chinese market?

C. Has this issue been raised in the 13 rounds of negotiations so far and, if so, which aspects have been discussed?

Answer

A. In the context of China FTA negotiations, discussions have focused on China's tariff rate quotas (TRQs) for greasy wool and wool tops, not contractual arrangements.

B. Securing enhanced market access for Australian wool exports is an important objective in the FTA negotiations with China. China applies a TRQ on greasy wool (287 000 tonnes with a 1 per cent in-quota tariff and a 38 per cent out-of-quota tariff) and wool tops (80 000 tonnes with a 3 per cent in-quota tariff and a 38 per cent out-of-quota tariff). Australia's exports are principally greasy wool, with China importing 173 000 tonnes from Australia in 2008–61 per cent of China's total imports of wool. In some years China's imports of greasy wool have been very close to the maximum limit set by the TRQ but the out-of-quota tariff has not been applied.

   The department is working with the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Australian wool industry in order to secure a commercially meaningful outcome on wool in the FTA negotiations with China. This includes issues relating to the wool TRQ and its administration.

C. Australia's interests on wool have been raised on a regular basis since the FTA negotiations commenced. Most recently, wool featured in the discussions between Mr Crean and Chinese Ministers in March 2009. Wool was also a major topic of discussion between officials at the 12th negotiating round, which was held in September 2008.

Question 19

Program 1.1

Topic: Trade issues—wool

Hansard 2 June, page 101

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

What are the current trade issues relating to wool being worked on within the department?

Answer

Free trade agreements

DFAT is currently undertaking negotiations or preparatory work for several Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). Securing enhanced market access for Australian wool exports is an important objective within these FTA negotiations. The department is therefore working with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) and the Australian wool industry in order to secure a commercially meaningful outcome on wool in the FTAs.

Trade finance

In response to representations made by segments of the Australian wool industry, the Department is assessing and providing advice on developments in the availability of trade finance to support Australia's wool exports. This includes the likely impacts of QBE's announcement that it will not renew export credit insurance contracts for the Australian wool sector as they fall due from 1 July 2009. DFAT, in consultation with DAFF, is assessing the matter to establish how the wool sector may respond to this change in financing conditions for the affected segment of the market and to further develop possible policy responses.

Mulesing

The Government is supporting the wool industry's efforts to find alternatives to mulesing and encourage adoption of alternatives. DAFF is the lead agency on this issue. DFAT has a trade facilitation role and is working with DAFF to facilitate the flow of information between retailers, industry and other interested parties, including setting up meetings between the wool industry and its customers.

Question 20

Program 1.1

Topic: GCC FTA

Hansard 2 June, page 108

Senator Abetz asked:

What would happen if Australia and the GCC finalised an FTA and then the GCC did a deal with, for example, Thailand. Given Toyota's investments in Thailand, the Thai component of Toyota could be a competitor to Australia's interests in the GCC's automotive sector.

Answer

The Government enters all of its FTA negotiations with the intention of concluding a comprehensive agreement which produces the greatest degree of trade liberalisation possible across all issues. In the area of trade in goods, which is the subject of this question, our aim is to secure the elimination of all tariffs within the shortest possible timeframe. In the particular case of the GCC, a key priority for our negotiators is to ensure that the outcome on goods market access, particularly as it relates to tariffs on our major exports to the Gulf such as passenger motor vehicles and a range of agricultural exports, is at least as favourable as that which our competitors in this market might obtain through their own FTAs with the GCC. Thailand and the GCC are not currently negotiating an FTA.

Question 21

Program 1.1

Topic: Staff in Islamabad

Hansard 1 June, page 107

Senator Trood asked:

What are the staffing levels at the Australian High Commission in Islamabad?

Answer

At 30 June, 16 A-based and 58 locally engaged staff (LES) were employed in the mission in Islamabad. This comprises staff representing DFAT, ACIAR, AFP, Attorney-General's, AusAID, Austrade, Defence, DEEWR and DIAC.

Question 22

Program 1.1

Topic: Governor-General's trip to Africa

Question in writing

Senator Trood asked:

Does the Department intend to debrief the Governor-General about her trip to Africa?

Answer

The Governor-General was accompanied on her visit by Heads of Mission and other departmental staff who provided comprehensive reporting on the outcomes of her visits.

Question 23

Program 1.1

Topic: Staffing of overseas posts

Question in writing

Senator Trood asked:

A. How many of Australia's missions overseas will receive new staff as a consequence of the department's budget funding increase?

B. Where are those missions?

C. How many staff will each mission receive?

D. How many of the approximately 100 new staff will be based in Canberra and how many are likely to be based overseas?

E. How many of the expected new staff will be locally engaged staff?

F. How many of Australia's overseas missions have three or less staff?

G. Where are those missions?

H. What is the break down between A-based and LES in these missions?

Answer

A - E. As of 10 August 2009, no definitive decisions have been made in relation to these issues.

F. Of the 91 Australian missions overseas, 33 (or 36.3 per cent) have three or fewer DFAT A-based staff.

G. These missions are located in Africa (four), the Americas (five), Europe (13), Middle East (two), North Asia (one), Pacific (six), South Asia (one) and South East Asia (one).

H. These missions are comprised of three or fewer DFAT A-based staff and between one and 25 DFAT locally-engaged staff.

Question 24

Program 1.1

Topic: Heads of Missions

Question in writing

Senator Trood asked:

A. In relation to Australia's overseas missions, can the Department advise the designated level of seniority of each Head of Mission?

B. How many current or acting Heads of Mission are not of the substantive rank designated for the mission?

C. Where are these officers serving?

D. How many Heads of Missions positions are designated as language desirable?

E. Where are those missions and what language is considered desirable?

F. What are the language qualifications of all current heads of mission?

Answer

A. There is no designated level of seniority for Head of Mission positions. When the department invites expressions of interest in Head of Mission positions from its staff, it identifies levels at which those positions have generally been filled. However, these levels are nominal and for departmental purposes. Filling Head of Mission positions is ultimately a decision of Government, and the Government may appoint a person at another level or a person from outside the department to fill a Head of Mission position.

B. See answer to A.

C. See answer to A.

D. Sixteen Head of Mission positions are language-designated.

E. These 16 language-designated positions are:

Post	**Language**
Lisbon	Portuguese
Port Moresby	Tok Pisin
Guangzhou	Mandarin
Madrid	Spanish
Noumea	French
Brasilia	Portuguese
Dili	Tetum and Portuguese
Mexico City	Spanish
Paris	French
Honiara	Solomon Islands Pidgin
Shanghai	Mandarin
Taipei	Mandarin
Buenos Aires	Spanish
Port Vila	Bislama
Bali	Indonesian
Santiago	Spanish

F. Thirty-five current Heads of Mission/Post have DFAT language proficiency ratings in 14 languages tested in the last four years. Current Heads of Mission/Post may have other language qualifications, but these are self-declared. The following table provides the number of current Heads of Mission/Post who have DFAT language proficiency ratings for each of the 14 languages. Some Heads of Mission/Post have language proficiency in more than one language.

Language	**Number of current Heads of Mission/Post with DFAT-tested language proficiency**
Bislama	2
French	9
German	2
Indonesian	2
Italian	2
Japanese	2
Mandarin	6
Polish	1
Portuguese	3
Russian	2
Solomon Islands Pijin	2
Spanish	8
Thai	1
Tok Pisin	1

Question 25

Program 1.2

Topic: Travel advisories

Question in writing

Senator Trood asked:

A. What specific factors are taken into account when deciding on the travel warnings for countries?

B. Why was Sri Lanka not classified in the 'do not travel' category during the recent internal conflict?

Answer

A. Travel advice levels are based on the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's overall assessment of the safety and security situation in a particular destination. In determining the level of a destination the department considers the safety and security risks and compares these to the general safety and security threats in a large Australian city. The department also takes into account the capacity of a foreign government to deal with the risks.

In some advisories, there is more than one travel advice level because while the overall country is at a certain level, particular regions within the country are assessed to be at higher or lower levels.

The department draws on a range of sources of information in formulating the travel advisories, including:

- advice from Australian missions overseas;
- the department's experience of the common or recurring consular problems Australians are experiencing in particular countries;
- intelligence reports, and in particular ASIO's National Threat Assessment Centre (NTAC) threat assessments;
- the advisories prepared by Australia's consular partners (US, UK, New Zealand and Canada), although different conclusions might be reached.

When necessary, the department will also liaise with other Government departments and agencies to ensure that the information the department provides is as accurate and useful as possible (for example the department seeks input on health issues from the Department of Health and Ageing).

B. For some time the Government has advised travellers to reconsider their need to travel to Sri Lanka because of the very high risk of politically motivated violence, the ongoing civil violence and the volatile security situation.

During the recently-ended civil war in Sri Lanka, the Government advised Australians "do not travel" to the regions of the country most directly affected by the conflict. The travel advisory advised Australians not to travel to the northern and eastern areas (including Wilpattu and Yala National Parks); not to travel to the north of the highway between Puttlam, Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa, including Wilpattu National Park due to the intense fighting in the north, particularly in the Mullattivu district and surrounds; and not to travel east of Polonnaruwa on the A11 road or to points east of a straight line between Polonnaruwa and the south coast, passing through Badulla, including Yala National Park due to the security situation remaining tense and unpredictable and violent incidents and attacks occurring frequently.

Question 26

Program 1.1

Topic: Asia-Pacific Community

Questions in writing

Senator Trood asked:

A. What additional funds have been allocated to sponsor the Prime Minister's one and a half track conference on the Asia Pacific Community scheduled for later this year?

B. When will the conference be held?

C. Where will it be held?

Answer

A. Funding for the Asia Pacific community conference, as announced by the Prime Minister, is under consideration.

B. The timing of the conference is currently under consideration.

C. The location for the conference is currently under consideration.

Question 27

Program 1.1

Topic: Merauke Five

Questions in writing

Senator Trood asked:

A. In Estimates Mr Ritchie stated 'I can tell you that consular officials arrived in Merauke on 15 September (2008), and they were there until 29 January this year'. How many times since they arrived have the five Australian citizens been visited by consular officials?

B. How many times have they been in contact with Australian consular officials over and above the consular visits?

Answer

A. Australian Embassy consular staff remained in Merauke continuously from 15 September 2008 to 24 January 2009. From 24 January 2009 until the five Australians departed Merauke for Australia on 24 June 2009, Australian Embassy consular staff visited Merauke a further 12 times to assist them.

B. In addition to these visits, Embassy staff were in contact with the five Australians by telephone at least three times a week throughout the duration of their stay in Merauke.

Question 28

Program 1.1

Topic: International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament

Questions in writing

Senator Trood asked:

A. What are the overarching aims of the International Commission for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament?

B. Do these aims correspond to paragraph 4.16 in the Defence White Paper 2009 which suggests the importance of nuclear weapons to American power?

C. Do these aims correspond to paragraph 4.59 in the Defence White Paper 2009 which suggests that nuclear deterrence will continue to be a feature of the international system for the foreseeable future?

D. Is there a conflict of policy aims and objectives between the Defence Department and the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament?

Answer

A. The aims of the International Commission on for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament are to strengthen the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, reinvigorate the global effort against the proliferation of nuclear weapons and make practical recommendations aimed at achieving the ultimate goal of a nuclear weapons free world.

B, C and D

The Department refers to the testimony provided by Mr Michael Pezzullo, Deputy Secretary, Strategy, Department of Defence, in response to questions from Senator Trood in the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee hearing on 3 June 2009. The Department has nothing to add to the testimony of Mr Pezzullo in regard to nuclear deterrence and the aim of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament to make practical recommendations aimed at achieving the ultimate goal of a nuclear weapons free world.

Question 29

Program 1.1

Topic: Head of Mission appointments

Hansard 1 June, page 52

Senator Trood asked:

Which are the twelve posts for which Head of Mission appointments remain unannounced?

Answer

Due to the sensitivities associated with ambassadorial appointments, which require approval from the host government and by the Governor-General in Executive Council, we are not able to provide details of HOM appointments until they are announced. This is consistent with long-standing practice.

Question 30

Program 1.1

Topic: People smuggling

Hansard 1 June, pages 70-71

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

Does the Minister have anything to add to comments I have made in relation to the comments made by the Indonesian Ambassador in the press about changes in Australia's border protection and immigration policies?

Answer: No.

Question 31

Program 1.1

Topic: EFIC insurance

Hansard 2 June, page 110

Senator Abetz asked:

A. Is EFIC exploring the opportunities to provide export insurance guarantees to small businesses?

B. Does the Minister have this under consideration?

C. When might small business be able to anticipate some action in this area?

Answer

A. The Export Finance and Insurance Corporation (EFIC) provides financial support to Australian exporters and overseas investors, including to small-to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). EFIC's support covers export payments insurance; advance payment, performance and warranty guarantees; political risk insurance; loan guarantees; and loan facilities for the purposes of financing eligible export transactions (ie. exports of capital goods and related services). In particular, the EFIC Headway product was specifically developed to provide a guarantee to participating banks to make additional working capital available to SME exporters. EFIC recognises the difficulties SMEs face in accessing finance and is currently working towards expanding working capital products beyond Headway for distribution through the banking system. Another popular EFIC product used by SMEs is the performance guarantee which frees up working capital to enable SMEs to secure additional or larger overseas contracts. In consultation with the Department of Foreign

Affairs and Trade (DFAT), EFIC is also exploring options for providing additional assistance to SMEs in the event that trade finance markets deteriorate.

B. Advice is being provided to the Minister for Trade on possible means to enhance EFIC's powers to allow it to provide financial support to SMEs in broader circumstances, particularly to support the expansion of their supply chains overseas. The Minister is also being advised on the impacts of the financial crisis on trade finance support for SMEs.

C. Pursuant to the EFIC Act, EFIC continues to support SME exporters and to improve the effectiveness of its assistance. The scope of EFIC's ability to provide assistance to SME exporters, including during the financial crisis, is under continuous assessment.

Question 32

Program 1.1

Topic: Staffing levels in New York

Question in writing

Senator Trood asked:

How many staff work in the mission in New York?

Answer

At 30 June, 14 A-based and 12 locally engaged staff (LES) were employed in the Australian Mission to the United Nations in New York. This comprises staff representing DFAT, AFP, AusAID and Defence.