

## **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS BY LABOR SENATORS**

Labor Senators are concerned that submitters and potential submitters may not have been given enough time to consider the legislation against the background of the administrative scheme. Customs have not afforded details of the consultation which they indicate has taken place with industry although there appears to have been extensive consultation with other Government departments.

This represents an increasing trend of Government-directed short (or extremely short) Senate inquiry processes. The result is inevitably that often highly technical bills such as these see less public scrutiny and less input from affected industry.

It should be kept in mind that the details of the changes have only been made public since the introduction of the Bills early in September with full implementation expected in January 2007.

The Howard Government would be well reminded that the prime task of business operators is actually working, running and growing their businesses, not making hurried submissions to Senate inquiries with last-minute notice.

In confecting short turn-arounds for committee hearings into legislation that directly affects the day-to-day operations of industry, the Government is in effect ensuring the voice of industry is not heard.

Labor Senators therefore call on the Government to give enough time for reasonable inquiry and reasonable notice so that business and the wider community are adequately able to participate in the Senate committee process.

SENATOR STEVE HUTCHINS  
DEPUTY CHAIR

SENATOR MARK BISHOP

SENATOR JOHN HOGG

