



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

## Official Committee Hansard

# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT, WORKPLACE  
RELATIONS AND WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION

**Reference: Workforce challenges facing the Australian tourism sector**

THURSDAY, 15 FEBRUARY 2007

CANBERRA

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**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT, WORKPLACE RELATIONS AND WORKFORCE  
PARTICIPATION**

**Thursday, 15 February 2007**

**Members:** Mr Hardgrave (*Chair*), Mr Hayes (*Deputy Chair*), Mr Baker, Ms Hall, Mr Henry, Mrs May, Mr Brendan O'Connor, Mr Price, Mr Randall and Mr Vasta

**Members in attendance:** Ms Hall, Mr Hardgrave, Mr Hayes, and Mr Brendan O'Connor

**Terms of reference for the inquiry:**

To inquire into and report on:

Workforce challenges in the Australian tourism sector, with particular reference to the following:

- Current and future employment trends in the industry;
- Current and emerging skill shortages and appropriate recruitment, coordinated training and retention strategies;
- Labour shortages and strategies to meet seasonal fluctuations in workforce demands;
- Strategies to ensure employment in regional and remote areas; and
- Innovative workplace measures to support further employment opportunities and business growth in the tourism sector.

**WITNESSES**

**BROWN, Mr Nic Keith, Assistant Secretary, Trade and Economic Analysis Branch, Trade Development Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade..... 1**

**DALY, Ms Jacqueline, Director, Business Employment Section, Department of Immigration and Citizenship ..... 11**

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**MADDEN, Ms Jane Lisa, Assistant Secretary, Services and Intellectual Property Branch, Office of Trade Negotiations, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade..... 1**

**WELLS, Mr Ric, Acting First Assistant Secretary, Trade Development Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade..... 1**



**Committee met at 11.16 am**

**BROWN, Mr Nic Keith, Assistant Secretary, Trade and Economic Analysis Branch, Trade Development Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

**MADDEN, Ms Jane Lisa, Assistant Secretary, Services and Intellectual Property Branch, Office of Trade Negotiations, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

**WELLS, Mr Ric, Acting First Assistant Secretary, Trade Development Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

**CHAIR (Mr Hardgrave)**—Welcome. Although the committee does not require you to give evidence under oath, I should advise you that these hearings are formal proceedings of the parliament. Consequently, they warrant the same respect as proceedings of the House itself. It is customary to remind witnesses that giving false or misleading evidence is a serious matter and may be regarded as a contempt of the parliament. Having made those introductory remarks, would you care to make some yourself?

**Mr Wells**—We do not propose to make a statement. We have made a submission, which I think you have. We will be very happy to talk to that or to answer any questions.

**CHAIR**—This inquiry has been looking into the workforce challenges in the tourism sector. There has been a bit of evidence collected to date about the importance of the tourism sector, but perhaps that it is not as well identified in a holistic sense as it should be, because tourism takes in everything from construction and transport through to the presentation and delivery of food and so forth. So it could be a life's work; we could make it the Sistine Chapel, as far as inquiries are concerned. Does your department have a view about the importance of this sector and the role it plays as far as international trade is concerned?

**Mr Wells**—Yes, we do. In the DFAT submission we have talked about the fact that Australia's tourism exports are by far our largest services exports. The sector is growing. It is obviously a very important ingredient indeed in Australia's overall trade performance, particularly in the services sector. We have given you some statistics, which are in fact publicly available from the tourism satellite account. They describe clearly just how important the sector is for Australia's overall trade performance.

**CHAIR**—There has been a variety of evidence from a number of quarters. Someone in Melbourne pointed to the way in which foreign operators are bringing guides and experts to Australia with them, perhaps displacing Australian based staff. In the overall scheme of things, is that seen as a major impediment to Australia's tourism growth or is it just a consequence of the linguistic and cultural diversity of the market we are part of?

**Mr Wells**—For a start, the regulations on bringing in foreign guides and foreign workers in tourism are, of course, the responsibility of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship and other agencies. From the point of view of DFAT, our interest is in measures that enhance the growth of the sector. It could well be that in some instances it makes sense to bring in qualified personnel from overseas where they are not available in Australia. That is not always the case,

clearly, but you could see a situation where, for some groups of tourists, they might well need specialised linguistic assistance that is not easily available in Australia.

**CHAIR**—What about some of the meat and potato issues of your department: free trade agreements and so forth? You have made some mention of that in your submission. Can you expand on the impact of these kinds of trade agreements, particularly when there is always discussion, even with New Zealand and the United States—familiar and friendly countries, depending on which sport is being played, I suppose—on cultural aspects of trade and so forth. Can you expand on some of those aspects for the committee?

**Mr Wells**—I will try. We have four free trade agreements in place at the moment and a much larger number under negotiation. Those four include New Zealand, which is our oldest and most comprehensive free trade agreement, and the United States. There are also free trade agreements with Singapore and Thailand. I suspect that the free trade agreements with New Zealand and the United States would be of greatest interest because those two countries are I think among our top four tourism providers.

New Zealand is a bit peculiar in a way because, putting aside some details, there is more or less freedom of movement of people between Australia and New Zealand, in both ways. Although it is very hard to pin down exactly what effect measures like this have had on tourism, I would hazard a guess that that freedom of movement has helped contribute to the very strong tourism performance we see from New Zealand. In the case of the United States, I am not sure if any work has been done on how the FTA has affected tourism. Are you aware, Nic?

**Mr Brown**—No, I am not aware of any work that focuses directly on tourism. Nonetheless, we would expect that the free trade agreement would result in increased movement of people between our two countries, including tourists.

**CHAIR**—I will yield to colleagues in a moment, but I will just follow this to a natural conclusion. When we talk about the movement of people, it makes sense that a two-hour flight from Auckland to Brisbane is going to make it easier for people to move than a 16-hour flight from Los Angeles to Brisbane, for instance, so I am sure proximity has something to do with it, as well as the FTA or the trans-Tasman arrangements. What sort of tourism are we talking about? Are we seeing short-term visits? I have friends who fly over and watch the Queensland Reds try to beat a New Zealand rugby team on weekends, for instance. I am sure there are New Zealanders who fly to Brisbane for the same experience. Are we talking about those sorts of short trips or are we talking about a very real, long-term tourist experience, like two weeks of something somewhere? What sorts of trips are we talking about?

**Mr Wells**—You will see from the submission that we have tabled that, based on projections—which are always uncertain—and past performance, New Zealand is likely to become a less important source of tourists to Australia as time goes by and numbers grow from other sources, particularly China and India. I think we would need to look at the figures to give you more information on the sorts of tourists we get from New Zealand.

Going back to your original question about free trade agreements, in the case of the United States FTA, one of the things that we expected to happen, and this is very hard to measure, is what we call the head-turning effect—that is, the simple fact of the two governments having

concluded a treaty-level agreement on trade would encourage greater attention on the part of American business people in Australia. You would expect then to see an increase in the number of US business visitors to Australia. Whether that happened, we would need to go back and look at the figures. I mention this as an example of the complexity of trying to work out what the effect of a free trade agreement can be on tourist flows.

I should also mention Singapore, which is a significant source of tourists to Australia. When Australia and Singapore concluded their free trade agreement—and I do not want to get into the technicalities—on the Australian side it was made clear that there were no restrictions in place on Singaporean tourism to Australia. So that could well have had an effect on tourism from Singapore. I am just making it clear that there were no regulatory impediments.

**Mr HAYES**—In a lot of the material that we have received so far and in evidence given to the committee, it seems most people are pretty buoyed by where the industry is likely to be in 2015 or 2020. I see that DFAT is saying that it is going to effectively double the export earnings from tourism, but what we are not seeing is the emergence of consistent strategies, even IP infrastructure, necessary to accommodate that. It seems to me, at the moment, there are a lot of areas of industry which are looking at here-and-now issues to overcome labour force difficulties, such as increasing the number of backpackers we can receive, as opposed to what we are going to do in the future. DFAT seems to be making the reliable predictions about where the industry is going in terms of economic value. Does DFAT have a view about the infrastructure that we need to put into this from the industry point of view to accommodate it? With the disparate nature of this industry, I am not sure that is fully translating out there in the business world.

**Mr Wells**—There are several points. First of all—I apologise for saying this because I am ducking the issues—DFAT does not get into forecasting anything. So the figures that we gave in our submission came from other agencies, particularly from the tourism forecasting committee. As a matter of policy, we do not do forecasts of overall economic performance or of the performance of various trade sectors.

I would note, however, that the tourism forecasting committee's own forecasts have been revised since we tabled our first submission, and that revision has been downwards. So you have always got to be a bit careful about forecasts. However, notwithstanding that, from DFAT's point of view it seems to us fairly clear that tourism numbers will grow. From our point of view this is consistent with Australia's increasing integration into the global economy. We are sure that we can expect to see more business visitors, partly as a result of the trade negotiations that we are conducting. The increasing importance of services, both in Australia and in other markets, means that you will see a greater flow of people to and from Australia. I do not know that we are qualified to talk about the broader tourism market, such as backpackers.

**Mr HAYES**—Not so much the market; I mean introducing backpackers to work as low-skilled labour in this industry to fill the vacuum. Basically, could you address your comments to issues of skills shortage and labour shortage, which this industry seems to be running up against? It seems that it will be acute into the future unless something occurs in terms of planning. There is a lot of disparity in the way those issues are being addressed.

**Mr Wells**—We are aware of the comments that people in the industry have made on the skills shortage. This is not DFAT's area of competence. From DFAT's point of view all I can say is

what you would have heard from other departments: clearly the government now has in place flexible schemes under which skilled labour can be brought into Australia on a short-term basis to fill those areas where skills are not available in Australia. That is really, as I said, the responsibility of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. We have an interest in observing that because the adequacy of the workforce in Australia does have an effect on our trade performance. From our point of view, when you look at our trade performance, including in tourism, it does continue to improve. That does suggest that skills are available; what will happen in the future, whether there will be any bottlenecks, is obviously another question.

**CHAIR**—I would like to unravel that further. I am glad you said what you just said because I had a head of steam building up which you have nicely pierced. You are saying that DFAT does have an interest in observing all of these things even though it is not your finite or absolute localised area of expertise. You have just said that, despite all the talk about the shortages of skills or indeed labour—it is a people shortage more than a skills shortage—our trade in tourism keeps going up. So within Australia there are the mismatches rather than in the overall picture of Australia. Is that what you are saying?

**Mr Wells**—I do not want to comment on any allegations of mismatches. All I can say is that we do have an interest in our trade performance. Tourism is a very important component of our trade performance. Tourism numbers are on the whole growing quite strongly. As you have said, the projections are for continued strong growth. That does suggest that we must be getting something right.

**CHAIR**—With regard to the people and skills?

**Mr Wells**—Yes. Clearly, too, government will always want to look at what might happen in the future.

**Ms HALL**—What department is the tourism forecasting committee from?

**Mr Brown**—I understand it is affiliated with the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources.

**Ms HALL**—I am sure DFAT looks at those figures regularly and has probably checked them over a period of time. Can you tell me how reliable they have been in the past? It looks like a doubling in real terms by 2015.

**Mr Wells**—You are asking how reliable the projections are?

**Ms HALL**—Yes.

**Mr Brown**—I do not have all the data in front of me but I do know that, because of some of the experiences in the industry in the last four or five years—SARS, the aftermath of September 11, the increase in the exchange rate and so on—forecasts have been a little too optimistic. Nonetheless, as Ric has pointed out, tourism is still seen very much as a growth industry in Australia.

**Ms HALL**—That brings me to my next question. How much have SARS and terrorism impacted on the tourism industry from your perspective? How is Australia rated internationally in relation to terrorism?

**Mr Brown**—I do not have any analyses in front of me, but I think it is common knowledge that the growth in the tourism industry in Australia was punctured somewhat by those experiences. Nonetheless, I think, looking at comparable markets we did not do too badly. Also the industry is looking forward to sustained growth in the future.

**Mr Wells**—We are not talking about just Australia; we are talking about a global downturn in tourism as a result of SARS, September 11 et cetera. You would know better than we do that the tourism industry is a very sensitive one, and people, when they make their plans for tourism, do respond very quickly to security and other concerns. So possibly the projections that were developed for tourist numbers did not eventuate because of a global downturn. The other point to make—and I think it is worthwhile remembering—is that it is very hard to analyse why things happen the way they do in tourism. One of the factors to bear in mind is that, following the Sydney Olympics, which was a high point for tourism—

**Ms HALL**—I noticed!

**Mr Wells**—there was a downturn, which you would expect. To some extent that coincided with the developments we're talking about. So trying to disaggregate all of those and work out what caused what is rather difficult.

**Ms HALL**—Yes. You could argue too that there could be an increase in tourism to Australia because of the Olympics, because they showcased Australia. Have you noticed any correlation between the downturn in tourism and Australia's involvement in the Iraq war—linking that to terrorism and all the other issues?

**Mr Wells**—No, we are not aware of any correlation between what has happened in tourism and the Iraq war. I suppose we would need to go back and look at what happened year by year.

**Ms HALL**—That would be really good if you could give us some information on that. My next question is a little easier; it is about Austrade and the involvement of Austrade. How successfully is Austrade used to promote Australia as a destination for tourists as well as a destination for conferences and major events? Do you have any empirical information that shows how Austrade's involvement in a particular area has led to an increase in tourism? I am happy for you to get back to us on this.

**Mr Wells**—Are Austrade appearing as witnesses?

**Ms HALL**—No.

**Mr Wells**—Well, we can talk if you like. We've got stuff that we can read out to you that we've got from Austrade about what they do, or we can just submit it in writing.

**Ms HALL**—I would be happy, if the committee would be happy, for it to be submitted in writing. I am aware of some of the things that Austrade have done that have been very

beneficial. If you have an example in mind and you would like to talk about it, that's fine; otherwise, just submit it in writing.

**CHAIR**—On that, we have received submissions in other places that Australia as a destination is not being well promoted—that different states and territories get promoted but Australia as a whole as a destination is not well promoted overseas. I must say I am a bit dismayed by a lot of what Austrade supposedly do in a lot of these areas. I remember going to Vietnam as a minister and finding that the Austrade response in Ho Chi Minh City on education services was, 'We just flick them off to the nearest TAFE representative we can find.' So I think Austrade are not as well involved in any of these things as they could be. But arguably—in their defence, after that criticism—perhaps it is in fact the job of the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources. I don't want you to think, 'Here's Hardgrave beating up DFAT again now that he's involved in a committee,' because I did this years ago on the treaties committee. But I want you to know that I would like to see what Austrade's objective efforts are to promote Australia as a destination and their role in tourism promotion in general. What advice do they give to DITR? What critique and advice do they give on behalf of the government to other agencies within government about the effect of their promotional activities or otherwise on the overall trade story?

**Ms HALL**—I only raised Austrade because you referred to them in your submission at page 8.

**Mr Wells**—Yes. I do not think we have anything at the moment that we can add to the submission, so there is not much point reading the submission out.

**Ms HALL**—That is fine.

**Mr Wells**—But we will talk to Austrade and we will provide you with much more information on what Austrade does.

**CHAIR**—In reading what I have just said—I do not want anyone to take offence at it—you could use it as an excuse and say, 'It's not really Austrade's role.' We will be happy if we receive that if that is what you tell us.

**Mr Wells**—No, we will not be telling you that, and I am pretty sure that that is not what Austrade's view of its role in tourism would be. I think the best thing would be if we can get some more detailed information for you setting out what Austrade does. Maybe that would be of interest to you.

**CHAIR**—Yes.

**Mr Wells**—Could I go back to the question of the effect of the Iraq war on tourism. It depends what you mean by the Iraq war. If you mean the Iraq war, the invasion of Afghanistan, September 11, all of those are part, I suppose, of a sense of global insecurity, which could well have had an effect on tourism. If you mean Australia's involvement in the Iraq war, I think it almost inconceivable that that would have had an effect on the Australian tourist industry.

**Ms HALL**—Perception of Australia as a safe destination—and coupled with those other two incidents, I suppose.

**Mr Wells**—I doubt that the sorts of tourists who come to Australia or our source countries for tourism would have seen our involvement in the Iraq war as making Australia a less safe tourist destination. If anything, you could argue it could well have been the other way around, but I think the impact would have been marginal. However, we will look at the figures and see if anything can be done to disaggregate it. I think it would be unlikely.

**Ms HALL**—That would be appreciated.

**Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR**—I am looking at the forecast charts on pages 5 and 6 of the submission, perhaps firstly at the bottom of page 5. I know the chart comes from the tourism forecasting committee. I am not sure how that is comprised, and I am not sure whether you know. It shows extraordinary growth in China's involvement, and it makes sense to me on the face of it, because of the economic growth of China and their inclination to want to travel beyond their own country. I specifically turn to the charts on page 6, which look at the inbound economic value. I have not read the submission fully—I have only glanced at it—but I will have a closer look. In this submission, or if you have it elsewhere, could you provide the reasoning for that sort of forecast? Off the top of my head, I can draw upon a number of obvious factors as to why China would grow but why, for example, would it grow sixfold in 10 years? The other thing I would like to ask is: why would Japan go backwards—not relative to any other place but relative to its current value in real terms? I was wondering if there were answers, beyond what is in the submission, to those two particular questions.

**Mr Wells**—I think we can answer some of those questions now. For others we would need to go back and talk to the tourism forecasting committee. China is one I can talk about. As you say, it is partly the rapid pace of economic development in China. The thing to remember about Chinese tourism, however, is that it is still substantially controlled by the Chinese government, so the nature of Chinese tourism does tend to be large groups rather than the budget end of tourism. That might be one reason why the value of tourism from China is expected to grow.

A lot of the increase in tourism growth from China, of course, depends on the willingness of the Chinese government to agree to designate certain places as approved destinations for tourism. You cannot just go anywhere as part of a tourist group in China, particularly not if you live in the provinces outside the major cities. I think we are expecting—and this is really the area of the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources—a substantial increase in the number of agreements on approved destinations; that is to say, more and more Chinese provinces will have Australia as an approved destination.

Can anybody talk about Japan?

**Mr Brown**—We can certainly find out a bit more about Japan for you, although the Tourism Forecasting Committee have since issued revised forecasts.

**Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR**—It is just that, of all the major countries that are coming to us, it is the only one that is forecast to fall, not relative to others but to itself.

**Mr Brown**—We can certainly go back to the forecasting committee and ask them some questions.

**Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR**—I would appreciate that.

**Mr Wells**—Beware, though—and I am putting on my China hat again, because I am also the chief negotiator for our free trade agreement with China—that it always pays to be careful about extrapolations to do with China. They might well happen but there are a lot of other factors involved.

**Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR**—Sure.

**CHAIR**—With regard to China, you would be monitoring some of the visa failures that have occurred as well? Approved destination status is afforded to Australia from a number of provinces, but equally some provinces have had a failure-to-return rate that is particularly high. From your discussions with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship about those sorts of issues, do you know whether that has become a bit of an impediment to growth out of China? Do the Chinese authorities take offence at that or are they very cooperative in those sorts of matters?

**Mr Wells**—The Chinese government would like Australia to be less rigorous in its visa requirements and processing, and we have explained to the Chinese the fact that there is a relatively high overstay rate for Chinese. I do not think they like that but they understand why we do it.

**CHAIR**—What about the advice you give as far as Australia's preparedness to cope with whatever the projections are on growth and influx from India and China? Do you think that the tourism sector is adequately able to communicate its appeal to those markets and, indeed, provide the level of service that is expected from those markets here? Do you have any advice on that?

**Mr Wells**—No, I do not know that we have been asked by other governments about our ability to sustain greater tourist numbers.

**CHAIR**—I raised earlier the use of foreign tour guides. The GATS—the General Agreement on Trade in Services—has a requirement that there is literally a local branch office of some foreign company that might bring those guides in from other places. Are you well satisfied that these are ridgy-didge, real local operations? Or are they just a shopfront and the lights are turned off when the tour is finished? Are you satisfied that we are seeing the requirements under this General Agreement on Trade in Services being met?

**Ms Madden**—Yes. It is up to the Australian government to fulfil thoroughly the requirements under our international obligations, including the General Agreement on Trade in Services and, with regard to temporary entry for skilled service providers, this is monitored very carefully, as we previously discussed, by our Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

**CHAIR**—The GATS, though, is negotiated by DFAT?

**Ms Madden**—That is right, on behalf of the Australian government.

**CHAIR**—Of course; we hope so. Would it be true, though, that there is some checking mechanism in place to make certain that if a company that is bringing a foreign tourist guide to Australia is operating here on a constant basis, not just simply when a tour is operating? In other words, at the end of the tour, they switch the light off and no longer have the door open, even though they still have a shingle out the front to say they have advertised. Have we had any examples of them finding a way around the GATS in that regard, or is this quite acceptable under the General Agreement on Trade in Services?

**Ms Madden**—To my knowledge, no.

**Mr Wells**—We have asked DIAC and DITR whether there have been checks in these areas, but in general I know that the Department of Immigration and Citizenship is quite active in checking that the various requirements for the movement of people to Australia are met. I cannot say off the top of my head whether checks have been carried out in this area.

**CHAIR**—I am sure the department of immigration are checking visa requirements but are they also checking under the GATS, because I would be stunned if they are.

**Mr Wells**—The GATS is just a reflection of Australia's existing regulations. Our regulations, if I understand it correctly, state that companies have to have a commercial presence in Australia.

**CHAIR**—What I am trying to find out is: does that commercial presence extend beyond the time a tour is being operated by a company or is it simply while the tour is operating? We hear stories where on the Gold Coast in the past a tour arrives from a country. They are picked up by a bus owned by the company that has brought them out and taken to hotels and shops owned by the company and then put on the bus and taken back to their aeroplane and out of Australia. What I am wondering is: when that tour finishes, is that company shopfront, as required under the GATS, still operating or is that company shopfront locked and the lights switched off until they have the next tour? In other words, is that permissible under the GATS or is it a breach of it? It certainly cannot be the department of immigration's requirement to look after that, I would not have thought.

**Mr Wells**—We will check on that. The question is whether in fact these regulations are state government regulations.

**CHAIR**—The state governments did not negotiate the GATS.

**Mr Wells**—No. I should explain—and this is not my area: when we negotiate our obligations on trade in services, we need to ensure that what we commit to is consistent with regulation across the board in Australia, whether it is federal or state.

**CHAIR**—Or people have to change those laws.

**Mr Wells**—Or people have to change the laws, but there are often difficulties associated with that and the government might not want it to happen. All I am saying is that the GATS does not necessarily say whether an undertaking by Australia is the result of federal legislation or state legislation, nor does it necessarily identify which level of government has competence for it.

**CHAIR**—I accept that that is the consequence of some of the treaties we have negotiated over the years, because we are a federal system and many of the unilateral states we sign up to have one government, one central authority; I accept that. In your submission you say:

... the cross-border supply of travel agency and tour operator services is limited by the requirement for foreign providers to have a commercial presence (i.e. a local office or agent). This is in order to provide protection to consumers.

What I want to be sure of is that there is in fact a check on that. Whether they are Commonwealth or state officials, I just want to know whether or not that is a big deal or whether we do not care. Is the fact that they have the shop open when the tour is on enough or do they have to have an ongoing presence in Australia in order to come and bring a foreign worker to Australia for a tour and then leave? I am just trying to work out what is in it for Australia when we have these circumstances. It has come up in evidence. See what you can find out for us.

**Mr Wells**—We will check on that and get back to you.

**CHAIR**—I thank the officers of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

[11.55 am]

**DALY, Ms Jacqueline, Director, Business Employment Section, Department of Immigration and Citizenship**

**JOB, Mr Peter Douglas, Director, Working Holiday and Sponsored Training, Department of Immigration and Citizenship**

**CHAIR**—I welcome representatives of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. Although the committee does not require you to give evidence under oath, I should advise you that these hearings are formal proceedings of the parliament and consequently warrant the same respect as proceedings of the House itself. It is customary to remind witnesses that giving false or misleading evidence is a serious matter and may be regarded as a contempt of parliament. Are there any opening remarks that you would care to make?

**Mr Job**—Yes, Chair. You have our submission. The only thing I would highlight from the submission is the fact that we have got highlighted in there a number of visa options that we have outlined in general terms that provide opportunities for people to come to Australia and to work, to come to Australia and undertake other activities, or to indeed come to Australia and remain permanently. We have identified these as key visas amongst some of the 130 in all that we have that would be most relevant to the tourism industry and the possible contributions that it can make in terms of the skill and labour shortages in that regard. We learn from the secretary that you were particularly keen on talking about working holiday maker arrangements and also the 457 visas, so we should be able to handle most of your concerns or queries in those areas. We would be happy to take any questions that you have.

**Mr HAYES**—One of the issues that have been raised with us by operators, particularly out of Queensland, is that there is a further need to allow student participation in the country, particularly backpackers coming in on working holidays. I know it has been extended, but from the perspective of administering the schemes, is there a real concern for the department or is this just what we get from an operator who wants a form of cheap labour?

**Mr Job**—The concern obviously from the employment perspective is always going to be about rigor and integrity in the visas and exploitation being the main issue of concern at all times. In the Working Holiday Maker Scheme they do have the flexibility at least to be able to move on to other employers if there are concerns in that relationship with their employer. We do see the benefits of the working holiday maker scheme as being significantly positive to the Australian economy, both in terms of the economic contribution that the working holiday makers make in net terms but also in terms of the contributions in some areas of employment where they are able to fill gaps as they go through. Our efforts continue to invite other nations to join this scheme. We are up to 19 now that have working holiday arrangements with us and we have another system called work and holiday, where we have already got arrangements with Iran, Thailand and Chile and we are looking to expand that into Bangladesh and Turkey. In fact, Turkey should be very soon. So we are looking to expand the base in the first instance but also hopefully to encourage larger numbers within those areas because of the positive contributions that they make to the industry.

**CHAIR**—It has been suggested to us that, when looking at the issues, that there should be some further flexibility in those arrangements. For instance, it was put to us by the people in Queensland that they just really wanted a constant supply of backpackers, whereas the Australian alpine ski industry wanted to be able to access people such as ski instructors et cetera. What they are saying is that the working holiday visa restricts them for about one week on either side of when they are going to be used in the industry for actually having a working holiday, whereas those of the industry who just want a supply of backpackers for housekeeping purposes are not terribly fazed by that. What the ski industry put to us last week was a review of whether to allow some flexibility to attract those sorts of professional people into an industry which is as seasonally based as the Australian ski industry is.

**Mr Job**—I will let my colleague Jacqueline Daly cover some of those on the skilled industry, because there are a lot of opportunities already in place and, indeed, a lot of the businesses in the alpine area are already using these opportunities to bring in the skilled workers. I got the impression from the submission that they made that they might have been referring to the three-month problem that occurred under the working holiday scheme. Primarily, in response to the hospitality industry, particularly the accommodation industry, you will have noticed that we have expanded that from three months to six months, effective from last July. That was in direct response to the tourism industry and, in particular, the accommodation sector. Quite often people are only up to speed after three months employment in that area—and then they lose them.

The two features that we have noted are that the six months will provide a greater return for that three months of training, and also that there seemed to be a tendency to move within like industries. So they may have been trained in the hospitality, the restaurant or the accommodation industries in Queensland, and when they move into another state they may well follow in the same industry area. So the training is not totally lost and may be being recycled through the industry in that way. We hope and we expect that the six months from 1 July will help the alpine industry, particularly in the low-skilled types of areas—and it does attract a lot of people in that regard.

**CHAIR**—Are you saying that the six-month requirement starts on 1 July?

**Mr Job**—It started last July, in 2006. It has already started. I think that will, to some extent, address the concerns of a significant element in both the alpine area and the accommodation area generally.

**CHAIR**—I suspect you are right, given some of the things that some people in the restaurant industry, for instance, have said. They have literally run on saying, ‘I have got this fellow for three months and you can have him for three months.’ There has been a lot of this sort of flicking between. I do not think there is anything offensive about that in the sense that they have been trying to get a quality, trained person shared around, if you like, while they are holidaying here. You have now responded to this and added a sensible period of, say, six months.

**Mr Job**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—That is being employed by one employer; that is the point, it is not?

**Mr Job**—Yes, that is so. But what we are keen to remember is that the visa is a tourist visa. The idea is that we want people to move around Australia. They might be working for one employer in some instances but, at least if they are in different locations, that is regarded as meeting our needs—that they have gone from Victoria and they have worked for a similar or a related company in another state. To us, that is fine.

**CHAIR**—I know you are going to say, ‘Yes,’ in answer to this question. Those requirements are rigorously enforced, I am sure. You are going to say, ‘Yes,’ but, in a practical sense, you are just relying on people to do the right thing under those visa requirements. Do you find many people breaching those requirements and move them along to another area or boot them out?

**Mr Job**—No. If they do breach, the difficulty is that they do come within the scope of having their visas cancelled. In many areas of that in terms of our priorities on compliance and field actions, the risk in this group is not particularly high. There is not a concerted effort in chasing those sorts of—

**CHAIR**—Is there an age limit on people able to access working holiday maker visas?

**Mr Job**—Yes, 18 to 30. So it is the young people. As might have been alluded to earlier, the trouble is that they get only one visa in this area and they cannot come back in later years. That has often been seen as a problem. People would like a chance to get another working holiday visa in a couple of years time, and they wonder why we cannot give more because it is an easy source to get overseas workers in quickly.

**CHAIR**—What happens if somebody comes on a working holiday maker visa, works for an employer for six months and then leaves? Do you see that simply as someone who has come and worked for six months and left—and that is a really rotten holiday; it is the sort of silly holiday I would have? Is this a problem in itself?

**Mr Job**—Research that was done by one of the groups in Melbourne—I do not know if you have seen it at all—the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, talked about people having, on average, at least two jobs whilst they are in Australia and said that just over 50 per cent tended to work while they are here. We certainly have had indications from some quarters in the industry that more and more people under the working holiday scheme are actually coming out here to holiday rather than to work and that industry are losing some of the sources of labour that they might have otherwise got in past years.

**CHAIR**—That is an interesting piece of evidence.

**Ms HALL**—A number of submissions in a variety of places have said that one of the avenues for increasing the workforce would be to use older workers, yet I notice that you still have age limits on many of your visas. Is that something that you have thought of addressing, particularly in relation to this area and also in other areas?

**Mr Job**—It is an interesting question. Certainly our working holiday scheme program is deliberately and consciously designed for youth, as part of our international, cultural and social exchange and relationship development. In terms of our other migration programs, the age

limitation generally does not apply in some of the temporary entry skilled areas. Ms Daly can talk to you about the 457 visa and the fact that there is no age limit there.

**CHAIR**—We will get to that in a second.

**Mr Job**—A lot of permanent entry is done on the basis of economic modelling and advice to government, and government has decided that that is the age that provides the major benefits to the Australian community overall through the immigration visa programs.

**Ms HALL**—It does seem to be a bit of an anomaly.

**Mr Job**—We have received considerable evidence about the 457 visa. The flexibility has been appreciated by a number of witnesses, but they believe it should be even more flexible, that it should be for a longer period of time, and industry sees that that would benefit them a lot more. Would you like to comment on that?

**Ms Daly**—The 457 visa actually can be granted for periods of up to four years and there is no impediment to renewals. So a person can apply onshore for a second and a third 457 visa should they then require them. I think the government's intention is that if people intended to have multiple visas they should move into a permanent stream well before that happens.

**Mr BAKER**—There are a number of regional migration initiatives. Has the tourism industry taken advantage of these or is it making any use of them?

**Mr Job**—There are two sides to the regional dimensions to our programs under the temporary entry. The working holiday maker scheme now has a program that says that, as of 1 November 2005, if anybody works in regional areas of Australia and in seasonal work or in primary industry work, they will be able to get a second working holiday visa. That is one of the regional initiatives.

The other regional initiatives relate to migration, in terms of our general skilled concessions, and finally to 457 and employer-sponsored categories—and Jacqueline can give you more information on those dimensions. We know from the high focus of a lot of the working holiday visa holders in the tourism and hospitality industries that, having got the second visa, the pattern continues: they often go on to work in the tourism and hospitality industries on their second year visa. Since that was brought in on 1 November 2005, just over 6,000 people have already accessed that option of getting a second visa and staying in Australia for two years.

**CHAIR**—Is it still the case that half the people who come to Australia go to Sydney?

**Mr Job**—There is no doubt that it is the biggest attraction. In fact, I think the figure is much more than half the people.

**CHAIR**—The big drawcards are still family, jobs and so forth. If they have a family member in Sydney, they are going to want to visit Sydney. For a lot of people overseas, Sydney is Australia.

**Mr Job**—Yes, Sydney is Australia and it is the focus. It has the beach scene and it is a popular idea for Europeans and Japanese to go there. I suspect it is the first place they want to go.

**CHAIR**—For once I can profess a little inside knowledge about your department. There was once a five-step sliding assessment scale from the capital cities to regional Australia. Central Australia was the fifth most likely place that people would go to. It might be helpful to the committee if we started to talk about regions. For Mr Baker especially it would be helpful to know where Tasmania fits into it, and we could see where North Queensland fits into it. Could we break it down into regional migration? There seems to be an ever-receding set of concentric circles away from Sydney. It is important, when we start to talk about the various migration mechanisms that exist, that there is an appreciation that there is a bonus paid to people the further away they go from Sydney and Melbourne. I think that is the case, isn't it?

**Mr Job**—We can look at the stats and see what we can get.

**CHAIR**—But people go to Sydney or Melbourne, then they go to Brisbane or Perth, then they go to country places and elsewhere. The last place they go to is Alice Springs. I think there is some evidence of that within the department of immigration. It is not my view. I am just saying that I think there is some evidence that shows what the likely patterns are.

**Mr Job**—I will see if we can get something on that.

**Mr BAKER**—What is the requirement in terms of the length of time they need to spend in defined regional areas before they can qualify?

**Mr Job**—For the second visa?

**Mr BAKER**—The first and second visa.

**Mr Job**—On the working holiday visa, there is no time requirement to qualify for the first visa. But to get a second visa they have to work and live in regional Australia for a minimum of three months and the work they undertake has to be seasonal work in primary industry.

**Mr BAKER**—Three months of the two years?

**Mr Job**—Yes.

**Ms Daly**—For the 457 program there is no distinction; you can basically work and move between sponsors as you like.

**Mr BAKER**—Do you have any views on extending it to a second or third visa and increasing the time they need to spend within those industries? You could create a schedule.

**CHAIR**—Mr Baker is right. Evidence has been given to this committee that working holiday visas should be extended to two years. Is any work being done on those sorts of matters?

**Mr Job**—No. We have not been keen to do it across the board, but we have tried to use that initiative as best we can to encourage people to go to regional Australia. The idea was that we

could say: 'Here's your one-year visa. Go to regional Australia and we will give you another year.' Rather than do that across the board, it has been used as an incentive to encourage people.

**Mr BAKER**—But you could take that to the next step, where the younger people from overseas would look at Australia as a destination, not as a stopgap as they move to other areas around the world. They could move to Australia for two years or four years. I see some benefits in that.

**Mr Job**—That is an important dimension for us, and we have very deliberately and consciously created pathways through our visa scheme. If we can encourage someone to come out on a working holiday visa to work with some businesses and that works well, the options then are for them to move onto the 457 visa or go on to permanent residency. That has been deliberately encouraged through that process, because employers will have a greater appreciation of the individual and visa versa, having worked with them for a period of time. We see that as a positive.

**Mr BAKER**—But if you extended that, that would give a broader base when they do apply for permanent residency. If they were here longer than 12 months, 14 months or two years—if they were here for three or four years before they applied—that would give the department a greater base on which to make their decision on.

**Mr Job**—The focus in terms of that end game of permanent residency is still on skilled workers. That is not changing; that is our ultimate arrangement. There are concessions for regional Australia under the programs that Jacqueline manages—the regional sponsored migration scheme, for example. Many of those coming through the working holiday scheme often start off in lower qualified skilled areas, find opportunities in the areas where their training or background might have been and move into that field. From that, they can move on to permanent residency or another temporary resident visa. But it then stops for the unskilled worker.

**CHAIR**—Once they become a permanent resident, can't any time of temporary residency be tacked on from the point of view of applying later on for citizenship? There was some move to make that change at one stage.

**Mr Job**—There are certain discretions in certain circumstances. This is not my area—you would probably be better able to respond to that than me.

**CHAIR**—Possibly. I am a bit scratchy.

**Mr Job**—Generally, it is from permanent residence.

**CHAIR**—You have to be a permanent resident to apply for citizenship, but times of temporary residency can count towards it in certain circumstances.

**Mr Job**—In certain compelling circumstances.

**CHAIR**—I have a couple of quick questions. You may well have covered this with the change to the working holiday visa, but I will give you the scenario that was put to me. The Kaohsiung

Hospitality College in Taiwan put to me 12 months ago that their chefs and their wait staff—all of the people trained at the hospitality college—go off to Europe for six months work experience. At the time, it would have been true to say that they could not have come to Australia for work experience as such because there was no such thing as a work experience visa. But they could come here under a working holiday visa for six months to go and work in a hotel and gather some appreciation of Australia, couldn't they, if they wanted to?

**Mr Job**—If they have training in a particular field and they want to come and do further on the job training in Australia, there are also other visa options, such as the occupational trainee visa. This is done in a number of areas.

**CHAIR**—What is that visa number? What is that called?

**Mr Job**—The occupational trainee visa. We know that some of the areas that have already appeared before you use that visa a fair bit. They bring out people with qualifications in that field—and maybe some experience in that field in their home countries—with a view to them getting Australian on the job training in those fields. This is done in the hospitality or accommodation fields.

**CHAIR**—This is in itself part of the problem, because in this sector there is not necessarily quick recognition of people's experience as being a qualification. When you say that they have a qualification from their home country, you mean that they have book learnt something and that they have a certificate to say that. In Australia, we do not quickly recognise people's practical experience. Unless they have gone and done a TAFE course, we do not think that they actually have a qualification. Can you get around that? Can you work with industry? I am thinking of the alpine skiing people. They were saying that they have people who work for them for 13 weeks of the year who then flip off to Vail and work for them for five months. It must be a horrible lifestyle, but that is what they do.

**Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR**—They would be always cold. Those chalets would get boring after a while.

**CHAIR**—The chalets would get boring, yes. How would immigration officials greet someone who for five years has been working hard in the Vail front office and wants to come and work at Thredbo who says, 'I've got a qualification, as I've been at Vail for five years'? Would that satisfy you?

**Ms Daly**—A number of countries do not have trades equivalent certificates or the like. There is scope to look at experience as a substitute for those certificate III requirements in the skilled requirements.

**CHAIR**—How long does that take?

**Ms Daly**—It depends a little on the risk nature and the profile of the country. As is often the case from China, we see people who come forward with certificate IIIs that they have probably acquired in two or three weeks rather than a trades equivalent type certificate or the work skills. For example, they may make claim to three years experience in certain occupations but they are

not of an international or Australian standard level of experience. It is very hard to tell you how long it would take.

**CHAIR**—Would you look more empathetically at somebody, say, on the working holiday maker list or the electronic visa list? Someone from a country with an electronic visa is less of a risk.

**Ms Daly**—I think the high-risk profiles are well known.

**CHAIR**—The recognition of front-of-house staff is an issue that has been raised. You don't set the list; it is a DEWR list—is that right? The whole modal is listed off DEWR's advice, isn't it?

**Ms Daly**—I would add that labour agreements are also available and we do have a number of labour agreements with the alpine industries.

**CHAIR**—That is just one recent example.

**Ms Daly**—I have had a quick flick through—and I cannot think of the numbers—but we are talking about hundreds of visa nominations that can be made under those labour agreements. There is not an insignificant supply of skilled workers for that industry. Sorry, I have lost track of the question.

**CHAIR**—That is okay. I keep interrupting you. I was asking about front-of-house staff. It has been put to me in a private conversation in my previous role—and it may have been put to the committee—that maitre d's in restaurants are not regarded as a skilled category, for instance. You are nodding your head because you have obviously had the same conversation.

**Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR**—You would not say that in Paris.

**CHAIR**—I think the member for Gorton is right; they would not say it in Paris. How do we get maitre d's, wait staff and wine waiters, people who actually make your experience at a restaurant or a hotel in the tourism industry, measure up to the expectations you have? How do we get those people recognised by the system? If we do not have enough here, we can bring people in or, indeed, we can bring people in to help train good people here.

**Mr Job**—In a lot of this of course we are guided by DEWR, as the department responsible for advice on those sorts of things. That is where we take our advice from.

**CHAIR**—I understand that. I just wanted you to say it. In regard to the 457 matter, we have been told that the approval process is too long. The 457 debate over the last couple of years has been pedestrian, at best, I think. People in industry now, obviously, are heavily engaging with the department of immigration, probably more than they have ever done before. Can you give us a feel about the sort of direct industry linkages Immigration is involved in to help you get a better understanding about how your processes can effectively work to not only get approvals for 457s faster but also make sure Australians in those same industries are not being left out of a job because someone from overseas displaces them? What sort of work are you doing to make sure that sort of middle ground is achieved?

**Ms Daly**—I think the timing for processing of the visa applications is one that has had a little media coverage of late—we have looked at it afresh. Our service standard for the 457 processing is 30 days to six weeks. That is the median processing time. If you could excuse me for a moment, I will find the precise data so that I do not mislead and end up needing to apologise.

**CHAIR**—Sure.

**Ms Daly**—For the low-risk groups, the processing time is between one month and six weeks—

**Mr BRENDAN O’CONNOR**—What is the low-risk group?

**Mr Job**—With all of our clients around the world we have gone through and done risk assessments based on historical performance on visitor visas.

**Mr BRENDAN O’CONNOR**—Low risk to the country?

**Mr Job**—The country itself is a low-risk country.

**CHAIR**—Why go back when they are required to go back? They meet the visa requirements.

**Mr BRENDAN O’CONNOR**—I understand, but you are defining the country from where they come, not any of the other categories.

**Mr Job**—Yes, and we have 33 countries for whom we give electronic travel authorities and they are effectively the low-risk countries.

**CHAIR**—Can you provide that list for us for the record; could you send it to us?

**Mr Job**—Yes.

**Mr BRENDAN O’CONNOR**—So there are obviously other categories—

**Ms Daly**—There are only two categories.

**Mr BRENDAN O’CONNOR**—There is no medium risk then?

**Ms Daly**—No medium risk. And they have a service standard of between six weeks and three months. I will have to check the way that one is worded. In any event, to give a comparison with last year, for the median of the totality, last year the processing time was 28 days and we have gone to 34 days, but you can see it is still within the published service standard. There is a growing attention to those higher risk applications. If we split some of the risk factors to give you a sense, in the ASCO 1 to 3—and they are the highest skilled occupations—the service standard for 2005-06 was 21 days and that has increased to 26 days. For the ASCO 4 to 9, which capture a lot more of the higher risk nationalities as well as the occupations that are associated, the processing times have increased from 29 days to 46 days. So it is a much larger increase in the processing time there.

**CHAIR**—The further along that list that you go, the higher the risk that you have identified, the more effort you put in, because you are conscious of the criticism that does come from 457 visa holders maybe displacing Australians in particular occupations?

**Ms Daly**—There is a higher level of referrals back to overseas posts, which can add time. If they need to go to outer regions for a particular company, they would schedule that in a group. There are other factors.

**Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR**—The deliberation the department would engage in would include ensuring that the reason for the application is genuine—that is, firstly, there is a skills shortage in that area?

**Ms Daly**—The fact that the position is required is usually at the Australian end, so it would be the Australian employer who would come forward and say that they—

**Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR**—Do you take that for granted or do you actually challenge that assertion?

**Ms Daly**—We do not labour market test on most occupations. If they are regional, we will ask—

**Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR**—If you said you wanted a clerical officer in Geelong, you would think that was hardly a good argument to get a 457 visa?

**Ms Daly**—No, and usually in those instances there would be some involvement of what is called a regional certifying body in the area to attest that the position cannot be filled locally, if it hits the skill register that is appropriate for that area.

**Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR**—But, generally, other than the absurd proposition I put then about looking for a clerical worker, if an employer were to assert that it required a particular highly skilled type of worker and believed it needed to have that worker come in from overseas and take up a 457 application visa, that would be accepted prima facie as evidence of the need?

**Ms Daly**—It is accepted on the balance of the program's construction, if you like. The pricing signals that are in place are part of what are being used to make it more attractive for people to recruit Australia, but they would themselves choose only to go offshore to find these skills—

**Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR**—So the assumption is: why would an employer even bother if he or she could find an employee locally?

**Ms Daly**—Find an Australian. With a minimum salary level of the \$41,850 at the moment for the 38-hour period, it is not a cheap option to go overseas at those lower skill level occupations. There is also the factor of the employment rates. At the moment, they are at a level that makes it very hard.

**Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR**—Of course. That is also evidence that would lead people to conclude that there would be a paucity of skills out there—those waiting to be employed. In terms of the high-skill cohort of countries, have you got a list of those countries?

**Ms Daly**—Where we recruit the higher skilled—

**Mr BRENDAN O’CONNOR**—I meant to say high risk.

**Ms Daly**—We have undertaken to provide that list.

**Mr BRENDAN O’CONNOR**—And how many countries are in the high risk group?

**Ms Daly**—I am not sure.

**Mr Job**—Other than the 33 that are in the low risk, all others are high risk.

**Mr BRENDAN O’CONNOR**—So there is no medium risk.

**Mr Job**—No.

**Mr BRENDAN O’CONNOR**—It is either low or high. You are saying there are 33 in the low risk, and every other country is a high-risk country.

**Mr Job**—Yes.

**Mr BRENDAN O’CONNOR**—Okay.

**CHAIR**—You are high risk until advised otherwise.

**Mr BRENDAN O’CONNOR**—Yes, pretty much, unless you get into the exclusive group of 33.

**Mr BAKER**—It is A minus B equals C.

**Mr Job**—The last part of your question that I was also interested in was the relationships with industry. You might be aware that there are Immigration industry outreach officers already in the community working closely with a full range of industries in a number of locations. That program is being extended for a further period. They have already done just on 18 months and they will be looking for another 18 months. We also have regional outreach officers who are working out of our various state and territory business centres, and they engage employers and industry groups throughout Australia as well.

We have also been running a series of expos around the world and I must say, from experience, I am a little surprised that there are not many in this industry that take up those opportunities. They are very much dominated by health industries, mining industries and the like which have taken up those opportunities to go to all of these international expos to recruit skilled workers for their industries.

**CHAIR**—That is a very good statement, very helpful to the committee. The question that begs to be asked is: would it be fair to say that you basically hear from people at the last minute? They cannot find a staff member, so they say: ‘We’ll import them from overseas. Come on, hurry

up, approve it. Forty-six days or 33 days or whatever, it's all too long.' Is there much workforce planning across industry generally and the tourism sector in particular? In other words, are they using immigration to fill the gap, very much so, at the last minute?

**Mr Job**—It is a difficult question to answer with any attempt at precision because you see a lot of anecdotal situations, as you have seen before you, where people have to run the business as their priority and then, at the last minute, they are racing around trying to fix up a loose end of a staff vacancy or a person who has left them with no notice. Yes, they are going to be anxious and we can try to work with them as best we can, but it is not an immediate solution to their problem.

**CHAIR**—But what are your field officers and your industry placement officers saying? Are they saying to industry, are they saying in regional areas: 'Look, you've got to plan what you're workforce requirements are going to be. The unemployment market is very low, the people being trained—you're either training them or you're not. Immigration is going to be your answer for the people you're going to need in the months ahead.' Are you saying those sorts of messages to people, or are you still going to be in this dreadful position of dealing with little crises as they come up, anecdotally or otherwise?

**Mr Job**—Part of the whole promotional program has been about making people aware at a very early stage of the opportunities for immigration and to factor that into their strategic planning arrangements, rather than a last-minute contingency afterthought. That is happening more and more now, and we have been quite impressed with the extent that industry is doing a lot more forward planning and engaging us in those discussions about getting sponsorships, getting nominations and the like prepared.

**CHAIR**—But from what you said before, not enough in this particular tourism sector.

**Mr Job**—There does not appear, necessarily, to be the same extent in this industry as we are seeing in some of the others.

**CHAIR**—Unless there are any further questions, I thank you very much for your time today. I wish you well in your work on behalf of the people of Australia.

Resolved (on motion by **Mr Baker**):

That this committee authorises publication of the transcript of the evidence given before it at public hearing this day.

**Committee adjourned at 12.34 pm**