



## Treaties Committee supports Certain Maritime Arrangements Treaty with East Timor

Federal parliament’s Treaties Committee has released Report 85 today giving support for the treaty between Australia and East Timor on Certain Maritime Arrangements in the Timor Sea (CMATS).

The CMATS Treaty will allow for the exploitation of Greater Sunrise, a natural gas field located between Australia and East Timor in the Timor Sea. Upstream revenues from this resource will be shared equally between Australia and East Timor, estimated to be around US\$20 billion over the life of the field. The Treaty also prevents both countries from asserting or pursuing their maritime boundary claims in the Timor Sea for 50 years.

While many of the submissions received by the Committee in relation to its inquiry expressed strong reservations about certain aspects of the treaty, the Committee concluded that supporting the treaty is in the best interests of both countries.

“The immediate development of the Greater Sunrise field will be a significant benefit to the people and economies of both Australia and East Timor, and the ratification of the CMATS Treaty was required before that development can occur,” Committee Chair Dr Andrew Southcott said.

However, the Committee was highly critical of the Government’s use of the rarely invoked national interest exemption (NIE). The Government invoked the NIE to bring the CMATS Treaty into force without giving the Committee an opportunity to scrutinise the treaty. The NIE is meant only for use in extreme situations, and the Committee reprimanded the Government for its inadequate explanation as to why the NIE was invoked in relation to the CMATS Treaty.

Report 85 also contains the Committee’s findings on four other treaties:

- a multilateral agreement for the protection of fur seals;
- an agreement with the Swiss Confederation for social security;
- an agreement with Finland for the avoidance of double taxation; and
- an agreement with the Republic of Korea for the protection of migratory birds.

Report 85 is available on the Committee’s website:

[www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/reports.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/reports.htm)

or by contacting the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4002.

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