

SENATE COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

This advertisement appears every second Wednesday on this page. It provides information on Senate and some joint Parliamentary committee activities. Senate committees encourage public involvement in their inquiries and submissions are invited from interested persons and organisations.

Economics Committee

The Senate Economics Committees are inquiring into the following matters:

Competition and pricing in the Australian dairy industry - the committee will be reporting by 28 February 2010 on the varying prices being paid to dairy farmers in different Australian states, including their economic effect, the impact of the concentration of ownership of milk processing facilities and supermarket supply contracts on milk market conditions and whether aspects of the *Trade Practices Act 1974* are in need of review.

Safe Climate (Energy Efficient Non Residential Buildings Scheme) Bill 2009 - this bill introduces a building energy efficiency trading scheme, setting a declining emissions intensity baseline for each type of commercial building. Property owners that emit above the baseline will be required to buy emissions intensity certificates from those that emit below. The bill offers an incentive for the commercial building sector to improve their energy efficiency.

Infrastructure access - the Trade Practices Amendment (Infrastructure Access) Bill 2009 is designed to improve the timeliness and effectiveness of decision making associated with the National Access Regime to ensure that future investment in essential infrastructure is not inhibited. The committee will report by 9 March 2010.

Liquidators and administrators - the committee is examining the role of liquidators and administrators, their fees and their practices, and the involvement and activities of ASIC, prior to and following the collapse of a business. The committee will report by 31 August 2010.

Textile industry innovation - the Textile, Clothing and Footwear Strategic Investment Program Amendment (Building Innovative Capability) Bill 2009 provides for a new scheme providing grants to clothing and household textile designers and manufacturers in Australia who invest in innovation.

Confidentiality of taxpayer information - the Tax Laws Amendment (Confidentiality of Taxpayer Information) Bill 2009 consolidates and standardises provisions from various laws protecting privacy.

Tax laws measures - the Tax Laws Amendment (2009 Measures No. 6) Bill 2009 contains a range of schedules relating to, among others, trust cloning exceptions to capital gains tax, income tax impediments to superannuation fund mergers and life insurance companies' annuity business.

Submissions to: economics.sen@aph.gov.au; information: www.aph.gov.au/Senate_economics; tel: (02) 6277 3540.

Independent arbitration of Public Interest Immunity claims

The Senate Finance and Public Administration References Committee is inquiring into a proposed process for determining public interest immunity claims made by the government in response to Senate orders for the production of documents. The proposal includes the appointment of an independent arbitrator who would report to the Senate on whether the reasons given for withholding the documents or information are justified. The committee will report on 2 February 2010. Submissions can be lodged online or by email to fpa.sen@aph.gov.au. Information: www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/fapa_ctte/indep_arbit/index.htm; tel: (02) 6277 3439.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee

The Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee is inquiring into the following matters:

Relaxation of import restrictions on beef - the committee is examining possible impacts and consequences for public health, trade and agriculture of the Government's decision to relax import restrictions on beef, especially relating to the import of beef from countries previously affected by bovine spongiform encephalopathy, otherwise known as mad cow disease. The committee will report in February 2010.

Aircraft noise - the committee will examine the effectiveness of Airservices Australia's management of aircraft noise, for report by 1 June 2010. Submissions due 29 January 2010.

Submissions: online at the website or emailed to rrat.sen@aph.gov.au. Information: www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/rrat_ctte/inquiries.htm; tel (02) 6277 3511.

An equity and diversity health check in the Navy—HMAS Success

The Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee is inquiring into equity and diversity health checks in the Royal Australian Navy as they relate to a check that was conducted on HMAS Success in 2009 and subsequent events. Submissions: online at the website or emailed to fadt.sen@aph.gov.au by 21 December. The reporting date is 18 March 2010. The terms of reference are extensive and available at www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/fadt_ctte/inquiries.htm; tel: (02) 6277 3535.



AUSTRALIAN
SENATE
COMMITTEES



Community Affairs Committee

The Senate Community Affairs Legislation and References Committees are inquiring into a number of matters as listed.

Welfare Reform and Reinstatement of the Racial Discrimination Act bill

FaHCSIA 2009 Measures bill

FaHCSIA Restoration of Racial Discrimination Act bill
The Welfare Reform bill will establish a new model of income management to be used in select locations in Australia. The bill will also repeal existing provisions that modified the application of the Racial Discrimination Act relating to aspects of the Northern Territory Emergency Response.

The 2009 Measures bill includes amendments to the income management provisions in social security law. The Restoration of the RDA bill, a private Senator's bill, aims to restore the operation of the RDA to a number of Acts associated with the NTER. Report date: 9 March 2010. Submissions due 1 February 2010.

Plain Tobacco Packaging (Removing Branding from Cigarette Packs) Bill - this bill, a private senator's bill, proposes to amend product information standards to remove brands, trademarks and logos from tobacco packaging. Report date: 17 March 2010. Submissions due 26 February 2010.

Food Standards Amendment (Truth in Food Labelling-Palm Oil) Bill - this bill, a private senators' bill, ensures that consumers are provided with clear, accurate information about the inclusion of palm oil in foods, and encourages the use of certified sustainable palm oil in order to promote the protection of wildlife habitat. Report date: 15 June 2010. Submissions due 24 April 2010.

Consumer access to pharmaceutical benefits - the committee will examine consumer access to pharmaceutical benefits and the creation of new therapeutic groups through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. Report date: 30 June 2010. Submissions due 31 March 2010.

Planning options and services for people with a disability - access to planning options and services for people with a disability to ensure their continued quality as they and their carers age; and to identify any inadequacies in the choice of, and funding of, planning options currently available to people ageing with a disability and their carers. Report date: 2 September 2010. Submissions due 28 May 2010.

Submissions to: community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au by the dates indicated; information and full terms of reference: www.aph.gov.au/Senate_ca; tel: (02) 6277 3515.

Treaty reviews announced

Five new treaties are being examined by the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties, including a treaty on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters with India, an agreement with Lebanon on protecting the welfare of children, a social security agreement with Poland, amendments to Appendices of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, and a protocol amending a taxation agreement with Singapore. Submissions on these treaties are requested by Friday, 15 January 2010. For more information, visit www.aph.gov.au/jsct or email jsct@aph.gov.au or phone (02) 6277 4002.

Other current inquiries

Submissions may still be made to the relevant Senate committee in respect of the following inquiries (for more information phone the number shown):

Bankruptcy legislation amendment bill	– (02) 6277 3560
Aviation and maritime security measures to combat serious and organised crime	– (02) 6277 3419
Australia Post's treatment of injured and ill workers	– (02) 6277 3526
Administration and management of the Torres Strait	– (02) 6277 3535
Native title amendment bill	– (02) 6277 3560
Primary schools for the 21st century	– (02) 6277 3520
Hearing health in Australia	– (02) 6277 3515
Energy efficient homes package	– (02) 6277 3526
Suicide in Australia	– (02) 6277 3515
Defence – Parliamentary approval of overseas service	– (02) 6277 3535
Fuel and Energy	– (02) 6277 3635
Water licences and rights	– (02) 6277 3526
Operation of the Law Enforcement Integrity Commissioner Act	– (02) 6277 3419
Regional and remote Indigenous communities	– 1800 728 963

Submissions

Please note that submissions to inquiries become committee documents and are made public only after a decision of the committee. Committees reserve the right to not receive a submission in whole or in part. Persons making submissions must not release them until they have been published by the committee. The prior publication of a submission will not be protected by parliamentary privilege.

Submissions can be posted to the relevant committee at The Senate, PO Box 6100, Parliament House, Canberra, ACT 2600.

General information and inquiries

If you have any general questions relating to Senate committees or inquiries please phone (02) 6277 3555, fax (02) 6277 3899, visit www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/index.htm or email seniorclerk.committees.sen@aph.gov.au

If you want information on:

- how to make a submission;
 - guidance to witnesses appearing before committees; or
 - what parliamentary privilege means,
- visit www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/wit_sub or contact the general inquiries number.

Reports

Reports of Senate committees can be found online at www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/index.htm and follow the prompt to each committee. Copies of reports, submissions and Hansards are available on CD by emailing SenCteeResOff@aph.gov.au.



DEPARTMENT OF THE
SENATE