

Introduction

Purpose of the report

- 1.1 This report contains the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties' review of three treaty actions:
 - *Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of Lao People's Democratic Republic relating to Air Services* (Brisbane, 4 July 2015);
 - *Amendments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS)* (London, 21 November 2014); and
 - *Treaty between Australia and the Federative Republic of Brazil on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters* (Brisbane, 15 November 2014).
- 1.2 The Committee's resolution of appointment empowers it to inquire into any treaty to which Australia has become a signatory, on the treaty being tabled in Parliament.
- 1.3 The treaties, and matters arising from them, are evaluated to ensure that ratification is in the national interest, and that unintended or negative effects on Australians will not arise.
- 1.4 Prior to tabling, major treaty actions are subject to a National Interest Analysis (NIA), prepared by the Government. This document considers arguments for and against the treaty, outlines the treaty obligations and any regulatory or financial implications, and reports the results of consultations undertaken with State and Territory Governments, Federal and State and Territory agencies, and with industry or non-government organisations.

- 1.5 A Regulation Impact Statement (RIS) may accompany the NIA. The RIS provides an account of the regulatory impact of the treaty action where adoption of the treaty will involve a change in the regulatory environment for Australian business. The treaties under consideration in this report did not require a RIS.
- 1.6 The Committee takes account of these documents in its examination of the treaty text, in addition to other evidence taken during the inquiry program.
- 1.7 A copy of the treaties and associated documentation may be obtained from the Committee Secretariat or accessed through the Committee's website at:
- http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Treaties.

Conduct of the Committee's review

- 1.8 The treaty actions reviewed in this report were advertised on the Committee's website from the dates of tabling. The Committee invited written submissions. The Committee also invited all State Premiers, Territory Chief Ministers and the Presiding Officers of each Parliament to lodge submissions.
- 1.9 The Committee held a public hearing on the three tabled treaties on 12 October 2015 in Canberra.
- 1.10 The transcript of evidence from the public hearing may be obtained from the Committee Secretariat or accessed through the Committee's website under the treaties' tabling date, 8 September 2015.
- 1.11 A list of submissions received is at Appendix A.
- 1.12 A list of witnesses who appeared at the public hearing is at Appendix B.