

Introduction

Purpose of the report

- 1.1 This report contains the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties' review of the following treaty actions tabled on 11 December 2013, referred on 15 January 2014 and tabled on 11 February 2014:
- ⇒ the *Air Services Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the Republic of Serbia* (Belgrade, 14 May 2013);
 - ⇒ the *Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of Vanuatu relating to Air Services* (Port Vila, 2 July 2013);
 - ⇒ the *Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing* (Rome, 22 November 2009);
 - ⇒ the *Protocol to the 2007 World Wine Trade Group Agreement on requirements for Wine Labelling concerning Alcohol Tolerance, Vintage, Variety, and Wine Regions* (Brussels, 22 March 2013);
 - ⇒ the *Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam on the Exchange of Information with respect to Taxes* (Bandar Seri Begawan, 6 August 2013);
 - ⇒ the *Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the Republic of Guatemala for the Exchange of Information Relating to Tax Matters* (Mexico City, 26 September 2013); and
 - ⇒ the *Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the Republic of Croatia relating to Air Services* (Zagreb, 4 September 2013).
- 1.2 The Committee's resolution of appointment empowers it to inquire into any treaty to which Australia has become 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 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 considered in this report do not require Regulation Impact Statements.
- 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 Copies of each treaty and its 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/Treaties_tabled_11_December_2013/Terms_of_Reference;
 - http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Treaties/Treaties_referred_on_15_January_2014/Terms_of_Reference;
 - http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Treaties/Treaties_tabled_on_11_February_2014/Terms_of_Reference.

Conduct of the Committee's review

- 1.8 The treaty actions reviewed in this report were advertised on the Committee's website from the date of tabling. Submissions for the treaties were requested by 31 January 2014, 3 February 2014 and 14 March 2014.
- 1.9 Invitations were made to all State Premiers, Territory Chief Ministers and to the Presiding Officers of each parliament to lodge submissions. The Committee also invited submissions from individuals and organisations with an interest in the particular treaty under review.

- 1.10 The Committee held public hearings into these treaties in Canberra on Monday 10 February 2014, Monday 17 March 2014 and Monday 24 March 2014.
- 1.11 The transcripts of evidence from the public hearings may be obtained from the Committee Secretariat or accessed through the Committee's website under the treaties tabling dates, being:
- 11 and 12 December 2013;
 - 15 January 2014; and
 - 11 February 2014.
- 1.12 A list of submission received and their authors is at Appendix A.
- 1.13 A list of witnesses who appeared at the public hearings is at Appendix B.

