



Breaking down trade barriers

Breaking down trade barriers and improving opportunities for Australian industry and business will be on the agenda when two treaties are examined on Monday.

The Treaties Committee will investigate the World Trade Organization (WTO) *Agreement on Trade Facilitation*, which aims to help Australian businesses better connect to the global economy by removing red tape and simplifying customs procedures. The agreement was adopted by the 159 Members of the WTO in December 2013. It is the first major agreement concluded since the establishment of the WTO in 1995 and is seen as a significant milestone in the development of a multilateral trading system.

A number of administrative requirements have hindered businesses from taking full advantage of the *ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA)*, Australia's largest existing free trade agreement. The committee will investigate the *First Protocol to Amend AANZFTA* designed to make it simpler to complete the paperwork required to do business in the two countries.

Committee Chair Wyatt Roy MP says these two treaties will open up opportunities for Australian businesses and industry.

"It is not just tariff barriers that inhibit businesses from looking for global marketing opportunities. Often red tape and complicated customs processes prove too difficult to negotiate," Mr Roy said.

The committee will also examine a treaty on mutual legal assistance on criminal matters with Viet Nam which will pave the way for Australia and Viet Nam to exchange information and evidence for investigating and prosecuting serious crimes.

Public Hearing: Monday 2 March, Committee Room 2R1, Parliament House, Canberra

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| 11.10am | World Trade Organization (WTO) Protocol Amending the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization
WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation |
| 11.50am | First Protocol to Amend the Agreement Establishing the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA) |
| 12.30pm | Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters between Australia and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam |
| 1.00pm | Close |

The hearings will be broadcast through: www.aph.gov.au/live

Copies of the treaties and submissions received can be found at:

http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Treaties

Alternatively, interested parties may email jsct@aph.gov.au or phone (02) 6277 4002.

MEDIA CONTACTS

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