



PARLIAMENT of AUSTRALIA

MEDIA RELEASE

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON TREATIES

Tabling of Report 172

Issue date: 8 August 2017

Services to Singapore, Logistics to Japan

The parliament's treaties committee has supported an amendment to the Singapore free trade agreement and the new reciprocal provision of defence supplies agreement with Japan.

Australia has had tariff-free access for goods exported to Singapore since 2003. However, access for Australian service suppliers to the Singapore market has been more difficult to achieve.

The committee's Report 172, tabled in parliament today, applauds the success the Australian Government achieved in protecting Australian services' access to Singapore and establishing a framework for expanding that access.

Committee chair, [the Hon Stuart Robert MP](#) said that "in an increasingly protectionist international environment, the amendment to the Singapore free trade agreement shows Australia can both defend its access to foreign markets and open up new fields for Australian business to explore."

The new agreement focusses on service and regulatory issues, including a new Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) provision that will protect Australia from claims on tobacco control measures, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, and Medicare, amongst others.

The agreement also sets up negotiations on the recognition of professional qualifications, providing Australian skilled workers with a path towards getting their skills recognised by Singapore.

In addition, Singapore has relaxed the requirements for Australian law professionals seeking to establish practices in the lucrative Singapore market.

The committee's report also supports the new defence supplies agreement with Japan.

The defence supplies agreement will allow Australia to provide logistic support to Japanese defence force personnel, and for Japan to provide similar support to Australian personnel.

Mr Robert said that "the agreement replaces a similar agreement that came into force in 2013, and reflects changes in Japanese domestic law relating to Japan's involvement in international peace keeping."

Specifically the agreement now includes the reciprocal provision of supplies and services for internationally coordinated peacekeeping and security operations. The agreement mirrors similar agreements Japan has with other close allies such as the United Kingdom and the United States.

The committee has recommended that Australia ratify both treaties.

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