



Review of proposed changes to Australian and New Zealand food standards

The Federal Parliament's Treaties Committee will be holding a public hearing in Canberra on Monday (10 May) to review a proposal to change the way Australian and New Zealand food standards are made.

Australia and New Zealand have a common food standards regime that is intended both to protect the health and safety of the public but also to reduce trade barriers between the two countries. The amendments to the *Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of New Zealand concerning a Joint Food Standards System* under review include:

- reducing the number of times a draft food standard can be reviewed to a single review;
- introducing a test for when a draft food standard ought to be reviewed, including review where there are exceptional environmental or cultural factors;
- introducing an exceptional circumstances provision to determine when a separate standard for Australia or New Zealand is to apply; and
- making it harder to make and retain temporary food standards within a jurisdiction.

The changes are being proposed against a background where the entire food standards system is being reviewed through the Government's Review of Food Labelling Law and Policy, chaired by Dr Neal Blewett AC.

The Committee will also examine taxation agreements with the Cook Islands, Gibraltar and the States of Guernsey. These agreements are part of a growing number of OECD sanctioned agreements that are intended allow the Australian Taxation Office to detect when an Australian tax payer is attempting to avoid taxation by moving income into tax havens.

Finally, the Committee will examine bilateral social security agreements with the Czech Republic and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

PUBLIC HEARING PROGRAM

10.00am – 11.40am, Monday, 10 May 2010

Venue: Committee Room 1R5, Parliament House, Canberra

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| 10.00am | Exchange of Letters amending the Agreement with New Zealand concerning a Joint Food Standards System |
| 10.30am | Taxation agreements with the Cook Islands, Gibraltar and the States of Guernsey |
| 11.00am | Agreement with the Czech Republic on Social Security and Agreement with Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on Social Security |

This hearing will be audio webcast live on: <http://webcast.apf.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>
Further information is available on the Committee's website: www.apf.gov.au/jsct

MEDIA CONTACTS

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