



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**PROOF**

**COMMITTEES**

**Treaties Committee**

**Report**

**SPEECH**

**Monday, 15 June 2009**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

**Date** Monday, 15 June 2009  
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**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Thomson, Kelvin, MP

**Source** House  
**Proof** Yes  
**Responder**  
**Question No.**

**Mr KELVIN THOMSON** (Wills) (8.48 pm)—On behalf of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties, I present the committee's report entitled *Report 101: Treaties tabled on 3 February 2009*

Order that the report be made a parliamentary paper.

**Mr KELVIN THOMSON**—In presenting *Report 101* of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties, I note that this report reviews two treaty actions: firstly, the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and, secondly, the Agreement between Australia and the European Community on Trade in Wine. In each case the treaties committee has supported the proposed treaties and has recommended that binding treaty action be taken.

The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions identifies the expression of culture by an individual or group as a tangible entity. The purpose of the convention is to protect and promote the diverse range of these cultural expressions in an increasingly globalised world. The convention requires nations to undertake to assist the creation of cultural expressions both domestically and abroad through regulatory, legislative, financial and technical assistance and to report to the United Nations on these measures. The convention is particularly concerned with securing cultural expressions that are under immediate threat and securing the cultural expressions of developing nations.

The treaties committee is of the view that the convention will help to develop and maintain Australia's cultural industries and to protect Australia's valuable cultural expressions. The committee considers that accession to the convention will demonstrate to the international community Australia's commitment to cultural diversity and that it will expand Australia's active engagement with UNESCO.

The treaties committee also considered the Agreement between Australia and the European Community on Trade in Wine. Under this agreement Australia and the European Community are required to accept a range of wine labelling restrictions based on the production and geographical origin of the wine and to recognise 16 previously unauthorised winemaking techniques. Significantly, Australian fortified winemakers will be required to phase out the

use of the terms 'port' and 'sherry' within 12 months of the entry into force of the agreement and the term 'tokay' will have to be phased out within 10 years of the agreement's entry into force.

The Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation assured the committee that, whilst there will be a cost to the industry in ceasing the use of these wine names, the agreement will secure the use of terms which are valuable to Australia's fortified wine industry, including 'ruby', 'tawny', 'vintage' and 'cream'. Furthermore, the government has provided financial assistance which will assist in the rebranding of wines. This project will see the term 'sherry' replaced with the term 'apera' within 12 months and the term 'tokay' replaced with 'topaque' within 10 years.

In exchange for Australia's acceptance of these labelling restrictions, the European Community will be required to permit the import and marketing of Australian wines produced using 16 winemaking techniques which previously lacked authorisation. Therefore, Australian winemakers stand to gain greater access to European wine markets under the agreement.

The treaties committee considers that accession to the agreement will strengthen trade between Australia and the European Community and is of the view that the agreement will provide Australian winemakers with greater and more secure access to European wine markets. I thank the numerous agencies, individuals and organisations who assisted in the treaties committee's inquiries, and I thank the treaties committee secretariat for its assistance in preparing this report. I commend the report to the House.