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Back numbers of *Emeritus*: http://www.anu.edu.au/emeritus/news.html

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Dear People

We have no ANU news today, but our Current Affairs section is alive and well.

Cheers

Ian Mathews Editor of *Emeritus*

Current Affairs

Inquiry into TAFE system

The federal parliament's Education and Employment Committee is inquiring into Australia's Technical and Further Education (TAFE) system and its operation. Submissions close Thursday 18 April 2013

TAFEs have played a critical role in the training and development of Australians for more than 100 years. For many Australians, TAFEs provide a critical pathway to training and skills which are increasingly needed to access employment. They also play a critical role in regions and in providing access for disadvantaged groups.

The Committee will inquire into and report on the role played by TAFEs in:

- the development of skills in the Australian economy;
- the development of opportunities for Australians to improve themselves and increase their life and employment prospects;
- the delivery of services and programs to support regions, communities and disadvantaged individuals to access training and skills and through them a pathway to employment;
- the operation of a competitive training market; and
- those jurisdictions in which State Governments have announced funding decisions which may impact on their operation and viability.

For more information: contact the Secretariat on (02) 6277 4573 email ee.reps@aph.gov.au or visit the Committee's website at http://www.aph.gov.au/ee

Committee to review tax and superannuation law changes

The House Economics Committee is inquiring into changes to taxation and superannuation laws contained in the Tax and Superannuation Laws Amendment (2013 Measures No. 2) Bill 2013. It is not clear how the recent announcement on increasing tax on superannuation earnings of more than \$100,000 a year will affect the inquiry as legislation will not be introduced this year.

Committee chair Julie Owens said the committee will examine the adequacy of the Bills in achieving their policy objectives and where possible identify any unintended consequences.

- Schedule 1 defines a 'documentary' for the purpose of accessing film tax offsets, and makes explicit that game shows are not eligible programs for film tax offsets.
- Schedule 2 exempts from income tax the ex-gratia payments made to people affected by natural disasters in Australia during 2011-12 and 2012-13.
- Schedule 3 enables eligible businesses to continue to pay their GST instalments if they subsequently move into a net refund position. This will enable businesses to continue to make their Business Activity Statements annually.
- Schedule 4 updates the list of deductible gift recipients, adding six entities. This will cost \$8.6 million over the forward estimates.
- Schedule 5 will provide for procedures to consolidate superannuation accounts where a member of a fund may have multiple accounts. Any consolidation undertaken should be with the member's best interest in mind.
- Schedule 6 will make changes to the government superannuation co-contribution for low income earners, including reducing the rate of co-contribution from 100 to 50 per cent, and reducing the higher income threshold from \$30,000 to \$15,000 above the lower income threshold. Savings of \$987 million are expected over the forward estimates.
- Schedule 7 will consolidate eight existing dependency tax offsets into a single tax offset that is only available to taxpayers who maintain a dependant who is unable to work due to invalidity or carer obligations. There will be savings of \$66.9 million over the forward estimates.

Schedule 8 makes amendments to clarify and refine the operation of certain aspects of the Taxation and Financial Arrangements (TOFA) regime; lowering compliance costs and proving additional certainty to affected taxpayers. It is anticipated that it will 'protect a significant amount of revenue which would otherwise be at risk'.

Although the April 5 deadline for submissions has passed, interested people and organisations can still inquire if late submissions can be accepted. The Bill is available from the committee's website.

For background information contact the committee secretariat: Phone: (02) 6277 4564 Email: economics.reps@aph.gov.au Website: www.aph.gov.au/economics

Australia-Japan to share security information

With the threats by North Korea still ricocheting around the region, Foreign Minister Bob Carr has welcomed the Security of Information Agreement between Australia and Japan coming into force through an exchange of diplomatic notes in Canberra. The Agreement is a key element of the security and defence cooperation agreed between Australia and Japan at the 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministers' Meeting in September 2012

Senator Carr, who signed the Agreement in Tokyo on 17 May last year, said it will build on Australia's comprehensive security, strategic and economic partnership with Japan. "The Agreement will strengthen the legal framework for the exchange of classified information between Australia and Japan, ensuring the mutual protection of classified information," he said. "This will allow practical cooperation with Japan through more timely information exchange."

Australia already has 12 treaties relating to mutual protection of classified information in force including with the United States, France, New Zealand and the European Union.

Japanese disaster zone students welcomed

Twenty young Japanese junior high-school students from the Togura, Shizugawa and Utatsu junior high schools in Minami-Sanriku, one of the areas worst affected by the 2011 earthquake and tsunami, were in Victoria last month for an eight-day visit.

The visit is part of the *Reconstruction Initiative* of the Australia-Japan Foundation (AJF) with assistance from the Tokyo Club in Japan, Qantas Airways, the Government of Victoria, the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Tourism Victoria, the Australian Embassy Tokyo, Wine Australia and Club Australia. The AJF's *Reconstruction Initiative* seeks to fund projects which provide assistance to Japanese communities affected by the disaster.

The AJF Chair, Mr Murray McLean AO, extended a warm welcome to these students who have gone through such difficult experiences over the past two years.

Mr McLean, the Australian Ambassador to Japan at the time of the tragedy, said he believed the visit would continue to strengthen the people-to-people links between Australia and Japan - two nations that are already close long-term friends and partners.

The young students participating in the visit wrote essays about what they would like to do in Australia if they had the chance to visit. Some of their essays may be viewed at http://www.australia.or.jp/en/news/20130322_essays.php.

The students experienced different aspects of Australia's school and cultural life through classes at Fairhills High School in Knoxfield, staying with local families, participating in farm stays over Easter in Ballarat and Kyneton, seeing the sights of Melbourne's CBD and enjoying an evening at one of Melbourne's favourite destinations – Phillip Island – to see the penguin parade.

Applications for native title anthropologist grants

Applications for funding to support anthropologists interested in native title work through the Native Title Anthropologist Grants Program were due to close on April 19.

"Anthropologists play an integral part of the native title claims system by identifying Indigenous connection to land," Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus said. "A shortage of anthropologists leads to a delay in the resolution of claims, and this government is determined to deliver faster and better outcomes from the native title system."

The 2013–14 application round reflects recent changes to the program guidelines, following an internal review. Mr Dreyfus went on, "The changes to the Native Title Anthropologist Grants Program provide greater flexibility for recipients in the administration of grants, including the option for multi-year grants.

"The program supports the Commonwealth's native title strategy and *Closing the Gap* agenda by focusing on faster and more efficient native title claim resolutions." The program targets three priority areas of need:

- Training and development for anthropologists to smooth the transition from study to native title field work
- Professional development and support for anthropologists working in the native title sector
- Forging stronger links between academic and applied anthropological work.

Mr Dreyfus said, "I encourage all eligible applicants to apply for the grants program in order to promote the professional development and support of anthropologists working in the native title system."

The closing date for applications is 19 April 2013 at 5pm. Further information on the grants is available at www.ag.gov.au

Child sexual abuse Royal Commission to take 'in camera' evidence

Measures passed by Parliament recently will give the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse flexibility to receive information and evidence in private sessions from those affected by child abuse in institutions.

"Private sessions will enable people to tell their stories to a Commissioner voluntarily and in a closed hearing. A person giving information at a private session will have the same protections as would apply to a witness giving evidence at a hearing," said Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus.

"The Royal Commission will also put in place procedures to make clear how, and in what circumstances, information received at private sessions will be used and disclosed."

There will be no right of access under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* to documents containing information obtained at a private session. Records containing information obtained at a private session will also not be accessible under the *Archives Act 1983* for 99 years after the year the record is created.

"The information shared by people will be sensitive and deeply personal and these measures will strengthen confidentiality," said Mr Dreyfus.

"It is important that people who tell their personal stories to the Commission feel comfortable with the way information will be used and disclosed."

The Royal Commission held its first sitting on April 3 in Melbourne at which all Commissioners were present. The Chair, Justice McClellan AM, For more information on the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse call 1800 099 340 or go to the website.

Sexual anti-discrimination laws

New federal legislation to protect Australians against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status has been introduced to parliament.

The Sex Discrimination Amendment (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Intersex Status) Bill seeks to ensure gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex people are afforded the same protections as everyone else under Commonwealth law.

So far reforms to 85 Commonwealth Acts have removed discrimination against same-sex couples and their children. The changes ensure that same-sex relationships are now treated in the same way as other de facto relationships for the purposes of Commonwealth entitlements and programs, including taxation, superannuation, health, aged care, immigration, child support and family law.

For more information go to www.ag.gov.au

Public sector whistleblowers to be protected

Public sector whistleblowers will have greater protection under legislation introduced by the Government in March.

The *Public Interest Disclosure Bill* contains three key measures to provide a full framework to investigate public interest disclosures, protections for whistleblowers and the circumstances where disclosures could be made outside government.

The bill was developed in response to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs report *Whistleblower Protection: A Comprehensive Scheme for the Commonwealth Public Sector* and will provide best practice legislation to apply across the entire Australian public sector.

Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus QC said, "I will be consulting widely with members of Parliament, community groups, experts and public sector representatives to make sure we get the best possible scheme. The Commonwealth is the only Australian jurisdiction without dedicated legislation to facilitate the making of public interest disclosures and protect those who make them. This bill will rectify that situation."

For more information go to www.ag.gov.au

Health committee wants a national centre for disease control

The House of Representatives Health Committee has recommended that the Australian Government assess the need for a national centre for infectious disease control, in a report released in parliament on March 20.

The committee tabled its report, entitled 'Diseases have no borders: Report on the inquiry into health issues across international borders' after holding a series of public roundtable discussions around Australia with infectious disease experts and other interested stakeholders.

A number of roundtable participants argued that a national centre would prepare Australia to respond to future emerging disease threats by improving national coordination and increasing efficiencies.

Committee Chair, Jill Hall MP, told parliament that as the number of people travelling to and from Australia increased, so too did the risk that infectious disease would be imported into Australia. "People movement across international borders is on the increase," Ms Hall said. "With this increase, Australia is becoming more vulnerable to infectious disease threats from overseas sources."

The committee made 15 recommendations aimed at helping Australia prepare for future infectious disease threats of global concern, particularly from the Asia-Pacific region.

"During this inquiry, the committee considered a range of infectious disease challenges for Australia, including the need to control the spread of disease between Papua New Guinea and the Torres Strait Islands, and the need to prepare effectively for the next pandemic event," Ms Hall said.

The full report can be accessed on the committee's website at www.aph.gov.au/internationalhealth For more information, contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4145 or visit the Committee's website: www.aph.gov.au/haa.

Post-entry quarantine inquiry

The Public Works Committee has held a public hearing for its inquiry into the proposed new post-entry quarantine facility at Mickleham, Victoria. The estimated cost of the project is \$293.1 million. Construction is expected to be complete by late 2018.

Periods of detention for imports of live animals and plants in post-entry quarantine facilities are important to protect Australia's animal and plant health status. The objective of the project is to deliver a single fit-for-purpose facility that will meet contemporary quarantine standards and operations. Existing post-entry quarantine facilities at each of five sites around Australia are more than 25 years old and near the end of useful life.

Full details on the proposal are available on the Committee's website: www.aph.gov.au/pwc

For more information, including how to make a submission, public hearings, and copies of submissions when they become available, visit the Committee website http://www.aph.gov.au/pwc or contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4636.

Migration and multiculturalism report urges more research

Australia is a vibrant multicultural society according to the findings of the Migration Committee report tabled in the Parliament on March 18. The report received bi-partisan support and made 32 recommendations after receiving over 500 submissions and holding 27 public hearings over a two year period.

The committee's recommendations include: rebuilding Australia's research capacity in this field, especially in qualitative research; factoring cultural and linguistic diversity into the Government's Social Inclusion Agenda, greater flexibility in English language training and support for micro enterprises, especially for women. The Committee found Job Services Australia needs to improve its delivery of services to people of diverse backgrounds, including refugees.

The report found that Australian multiculturalism is a success story, and stands as a good example to the world on how to build a cohesive society.

Chair of the Migration Committee Maria Vamvakinou said: "Immigration and settlement in Australia has always been a nation-building exercise. The committee believes that access to Australian citizenship has been at the heart of the success and cohesion of Australian society. Settlement is a long term and intergenerational process, and we need a whole of government approach and better coordination between all three tiers of Australian government".

Deputy Chair Louise Markus said the committee welcomed meeting people at the grass roots level where business and local communities were collaborating to improve relationships, and build skills and opportunities for people from different backgrounds.

"In Dandenong, the South East Melbourne Manufacturers Alliance is bringing employers and young refugees together; the National Australia Bank's *African Inclusion Program* is exemplary; and social enterprises, like The Studio, are inspirational. These initiatives deserve special mention and prove that cooperation, cross-cultural awareness, and commitment provide tangible results," Mrs Markus said.

A copy of the report and information about the inquiry can be obtained from the committee's website www.aph.gov.au/mig or from the Secretariat on (02) 6277 4560. All submissions to the inquiry are published on the committee's website.

Fair Work inquiry addresses bullying

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Employment is inquiring into the *Fair Work Amendment Bill 2013*. The Committee has called for submissions to be received by 18 April 2013.

The Fair Work Amendment Bill 2013 amends the Fair Work Act 2009, following deliberations by the Fair Work Act Review Panel and its report titled, "Towards more productive and equitable workplaces: An evaluation of the fair work legislation".

The Fair Work Amendment Act 2012 passed by Parliament in December 2012 implemented approximately one third of the Panel's recommendations and this Bill will implement several more, including the introduction of family-friendly measures such as employees' right to

request flexible working arrangements and be consulted about changes to rosters or working hours.

The Bill will also amend the *Fair Work Act* to give effect to the Government's response to the Committee's November 2012 Workplace Bullying *"We just want it to stop"* report. Workers who are bullied will be able to apply to the Fair Work Commission (FWC) for an order to stop the bullying behaviour and have that application commenced promptly.

For information on the inquiry: contact the Secretariat on (02) 6277 4573 email ee.reps@aph.gov.au or visit the Committee's website at http://www.aph.gov.au/ee

Reform to the National Classification System

The first stage of reforms to the National Classification System will be introduced in Parliament during the winter session.

The Minister for Home Affairs, Jason Clare, presented the reforms to the Standing Council on Law and Justice meeting in Darwin on April 4 where State and Territory Minister's agreed to the changes. The reforms implement seven of the recommendations of the *National Classification Scheme Review* undertaken by the Australian Law Reform Commission in 2012.

Ministers agreed to:

- broaden the type of content that is exempt from the scheme and reduce the red tape associated with running festivals;
- enable the use of automated classification decision making systems, starting with a pilot for mobile and online computer games;
- include classification marking requirements in the Commonwealth Classification Act and revamp existing statutory instruments so they are clearer and simpler;
- change the rules so that 2D and 3D versions of films or computer games no longer need to be classified twice;
- change the rules to allow minor modifications to be made to computer games without further classification:
- a program of research to examine current classification categories, symbols and community standards in relation to media content; and
- give explicit power to Commonwealth officials so that they can notify law enforcement authorities of content that is potentially Refused Classification prior to classification by the Classification Board.

Ministers will consider further reform at the next meeting of the Standing Council on Law and Justice in October.

Report calls for a comprehensive Native Title inquiry

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs has tabled its advisory report on the Native Title Amendment Bill 2012. The report supports the reforms proposed in the Bill, which will:

- Allows parties to agree to set aside the historical extinguishment of native title in areas set aside for the preservation of the natural environment, such as parks and reserves
- Clarify the meaning of negotiating in 'good faith' in future act negotiations and makes associated amendments to the 'right to negotiate' provisions, and
- Broaden the scope and streamlines processes for voluntary Indigenous Land Use Agreements.

The report recommends the Bill pass the House. In addition, the Committee recommends that a comprehensive inquiry is needed to chart a course for future reform of the native title system.

The Committee Chair, Mr Shayne Neumann MP, said that "by disregarding the notion of historical extinguishment in parks and reserves, traditional owners will be more able to contribute to managing their country and heritage". Mr Neumann added that "on the balance of evidence, the codification of 'good faith' arrangements will create greater certainty that negotiating with integrity with native title parties is a fundamental part of doing business in Australia and should be treated as 'business as usual' by mining and exploration companies".

The report reviewed the concerns raised about measures to streamline the process for the making of Indigenous Land Use Agreements, and viewed the changes as an important step forward for the alternative agreement-making process that complements native title determinations. The Committee received a wide range of concerns about the native title system, and canvassed areas for future reform. In view of these concerns, the report calls for a comprehensive inquiry into the native title system at the commencement of the 44th Parliament.

Mr Neumann said "this is an extremely complex area of law, and the main common ground held by stakeholders was the need for ongoing consultation, review and holistic reform of the system. The Government needs to build on the productive dialogue this Committee has initiated to develop a more robust and equitable system that delivers sustainable benefits to Indigenous communities and certainty to industry".

To view the Advisory Report, the Coalition Minority Report, or for more information about the inquiry, visit the Committee's website at www.aph.gov.au/nativetitle or contact the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4559.

Extra money for indigenous youth program

The federal government will inject an extra \$338,000 into the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency to provide early intervention services to Indigenous youth in the Top End, Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus QC announced on April 5.

"This funding will help provide services to young people, including those in remote communities for the next 18 months," he said. "The funding will support early intervention

services and case management to Indigenous youth entering the criminal justice system and aim to ensure the first time they enter the criminal justice system is also the last time."

Diplomatic missions – the next step

The National Capital Committee has presented its report on the allocation of land to diplomatic missions in the Australian Capital Territory. The report has made three recommendations focused upon finding better ways to organise the allocation of land to diplomatic missions.

The Committee has recommended better use of existing resources, including more rigorous application of existing lease conditions; medium- and high-density options for housing chanceries; subdivision of existing sites within the diplomatic estate; more extensive use of residential and commercial properties to house chanceries; and a steady evolution towards a more commercial approach.

The Committee has also recommended the development of a long term strategy for the allocation of land to diplomatic missions, to forecast demand and supply, and establish the various mechanisms by which these forecasts may be met. Alongside new property types, these include designating sites for future enclaves, establishing a role for the private market and managing impacts on local residents.

The Committee has further recommended that Draft Amendment 78 to the National Capital Plan, allocating land adjacent Stirling Ridge to the diplomatic estate, be withdrawn.

Committee Chair, Senator Louise Pratt, noted that embassies played an important role in the look and feel of Canberra as a city and a capital. "Canberra has evolved into a mature city. The needs of the diplomatic community and residents have changed over time. A new policy framework—a new strategy—needs to be put in place for allocating land to diplomatic missions, one that takes account of the scarcity of available land, modern approaches to urban planning, the diverse requirements of diplomatic missions, and the changing needs of the city and its people" she said.

Senator Pratt highlighted the approach taken in Washington DC, which involved incorporating diplomatic missions into broader city planning while allowing the open market to determine the size and location of individual missions. "The Committee was impressed with the Washington model. Its combination of integrated planning and market forces leads to more efficient outcomes and reduces pressure on the allocation of public land. It is a model that Canberra should look to for guidance," she stated.

Further information: contact the Inquiry Secretary (02) 6277 4355, email jscncet@aph.gov.au or visit the Committee's webpage at http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/ncet

Wednesday 13 March 2013

Treaties Committee supports membership of the African Development Bank

Australia's decision to seek membership of the African Development Bank has been endorsed by the Federal Parliament's Treaties Committee. In a report tabled in March, the committee recommended Australia ratify the *Treaty Establishing the African Development Bank* and the *Treaty Establishing the African Development Fund*.

"Australia is already a member of two other regional development banks: the Asian Development Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development," Committee Chair, Senator Matthew Thistlethwaite, said.

"Most of our competitors in North America, Europe and Asia are already members. The African Development Bank's objective is to support the economic and social development of African countries by promoting investment in projects that reduce poverty and improve living conditions," Senator Thistlethwaite continued. "Australia's membership should provide an incentive for Australian businesses to invest in Africa."

The African Development Bank mobilises the resources of its members to invest in African development. The Bank's interests parallel Australia's international development interests. In addition, the Bank's priorities are well aligned with Australia's aid program's strategic goals.

To become a member of the Bank, Australia must also become a member of the African Development Fund, a subsidiary of the Bank that provides low cost loans for projects with long term maturities or non-financial returns such as roads, education and health. Australia is proposing to join both institutions at the same time.

The Committee's Report 132 also contains the Committee's views on the following other treaties:

- the Loan Agreement between Australia and the International Monetary Fund; and
- the Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of Japan on the Security of Information.

Report 132 is available from the Committee's website: http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_Committees?url=jsct/reports.htm or by contacting the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4002.

Australia offers 2,300 tertiary scholarships

The Australia Awards Scholarships for 2014 will give some 2,300 students from more than 90 countries the opportunity to study in Australia. The Australia Awards Scholarships opened on 1 February 2013, and close on 30 April 2013.

For more information visit www.ausaid.gov.au/australia-awards

Dental services inquiry

The House of Representatives Health Committee is holding an inquiry into adult dental services to identify priorities for Commonwealth funding. Full terms of reference and further information on the inquiry are available on the committee's website at www.aph.gov.au/haa. For more information contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4145 or visit the Committee's website: www.aph.gov.au/haa.

2013 ANUEF Activities — lectures and diary dates

The ANUEF Lecture on 18 April 2013 will be held 4 - 5pm at 24 Balmain Crescent, ANU.

Neuro Linguistic Programming in Education

By Peter Natterer

Abstract: We all speak the same language; however there are significant differences in the thought processes that produce this language in any given speaker, and the filtering processes on the part of the listener. This can result in the listener experiencing a 'foreign language' under certain circumstances.

Accuracy in the transmission of information is important in many areas, including business and education. The exciting part is that it is less complicated than at first appears.

NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming) is first and foremost, the study and analysis of effective systems related to the impact of communication within each of us (Neuro), the language structure used (Linguistic) and the effect of this language structure on the processes within us (Programming).

In this presentation, Peter will cover the high level overview of the NLP model, how it applies to human communication, and then specifically how it can apply in an educational setting.

Biographical note:

Peter's passion for effective training and education led him to research more efficient techniques for knowledge transfer. His search revealed the benefits of using formal practices to engage his audience to impart knowledge and concepts in a way that is both enjoyable and enduring. The method he has adopted is called Neuro Linguistic Programming or NLP. Peter became so delighted by the success of the technique he decided to undertake formal training in the United States and is now a qualified Master Practitioner and Trainer. He now runs courses in the USA and Australia teaching NLP to both trainers and practitioners in a wide range of disciplines

Propose a Topic

If you have suggestions for the topic(s), or the TED talk(s) we should view, to lubricate the neurones, please contact Adrian (adrian_j_gibbs@hotmail.com) and/or Shirley (pipitone@grapevine.com.au) ASAP

ANUEF Room Bookings

Requests for booking the Molony Room should be addressed to Judith Caton via email, and these will be forwarded to the committee for approval, and then entered into the diary. A return email will be sent to the organisation confirming the booking. The diary will be held in the office rather than being left on the table in the meeting room. Conditions for the use of the premises will be emailed to users and a copy is on the ANUEF website.

Contact Judith Caton on judith.caton@anu.edu.au

What's On at the ANU?

What's On at ANU is a fortnightly email for staff and students that aims to highlight many of the interesting, enlightening and engaging public lectures, seminars and events happening around the university. All of these events are open to the public. Please check if reservations are needed.

For more information on any of the events listed, or to see a calendar of upcoming events, go to http://billboard.anu.edu.au/events.asp

Next edition of *Emeritus*, the ANUEF Newsletter, will be published in May 2013.