

EMERITUS

Vol 5 No 3

The Australian National University Emeritus Faculty e-magazine
April 2014

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Bigots unite

The Attorney General, Senator George Brandis, who told the Senate that people have a right to be bigots, has circulated an exposure draft of amendments to the Racial Discrimination Act which, if passed, would “strengthen the Act’s protections against racism, while at the same time removing provisions which unreasonably limit freedom of speech”.

There is until April 30 for community consultation in which “stakeholders” and communities that feel affected will be invited to comment and give feedback on the exposure draft. ACT Greens’ Shane Rattenbury has signalled an intention to have the ACT Discrimination Act amended to counter the Federal Government’s proposed bill.

A new section in the Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act will be inserted into the Act which will preserve the existing protection against intimidation and create a new protection from racial vilification. Senator Brandis said this will be the first time that racial vilification is proscribed in Commonwealth legislation sending a clear message that it is unacceptable in the Australian community. However the section on vilification does not apply to words, sounds, images or writing spoken, broadcast, published or otherwise communicated “in the course of participating in the public discussion of any political, social, cultural, religious, artistic, academic or scientific matter.”

Diary Dates

ANUEF Events full details are on the ANUEF website, and public lectures also on the ANU Bill Board
All events in the Molony Room unless otherwise stated

Apr 2 Wed. Noon for 12.30. Geoff Davies - “Sack the economists” – ANUEF launch of his latest book.

Apr 16 Wed. 4pm. Barry Ninham – “Aqua Incognita: Why ice floats on water and Galileo 400 years on”.

April 29 Tues. 6pm Law Link Lecture Theatre. – Panel Discussion. “Has journalism a future?” Caroline Fisher, Stephen Matchett, Matthew Ricketson, Lenore Taylor. Inquiries Colin Steele, 6125 8983 and colin.steele@anu.edu.au.

- **April 30** Wed 10 am–4pm, 2014
Research in Retirement Forum

Senator Brandis said on March 25, "Before the last election, Mr Abbott and I promised to repeal Section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act in its current form. The reason we did that is because, as illustrated by the decision in the Bolt case, although not only by that decision, the current language of Section 18C is unreasonably restrictive on freedom of speech, and in particular on freedom of public discussion.

"But there is a second reason why it is the view of the Government that Section 18C and related sections should be removed from the act and replaced, and that is because they do not effectively or competently address the very vice they're meant to address, and that is racial vilification. It is one of the misconceptions in this debate that the Racial Discrimination Act prohibits racial vilification. It does not.

"The term is not used in the Act and Section 18C does not prohibit the incitement to racial hatred which is the most commonly accepted meaning of the term racial vilification.

"I have said all along, and Mr Abbott has said all along, that a properly worded section can achieve both objectives of protecting legitimate freedom of speech and freedom of public discussion about matters of race, while at the same time containing protections against racial vilification and other unacceptable racist conduct.

"This proposed amendment does both. These are the strongest protections against racism that have ever appeared in any Commonwealth act, but they are more effective because they don't adopt the method that the pre-existing Section 18C adopted of effectively political censorship. They target the particular mischief concern that is racial vilification and prohibit it. ...

"First of all, the words 'offend', 'insult' and 'humiliate' are gone. You can't have a public discussion of an issue, particularly an issue about which people feel very strongly, I might say, without offending or insulting a person who has a strong contrary view. In parliament, the principle debating chamber of the nation, we offend and I dare say we insult each other every day. That is part of the robustness of the discussion of public issues.

"The inclusion in Section 18C in 1995 of those words, against which the then Coalition in Opposition warned at the time, has had a dangerous effect on stifling and, in fact, censoring public discussion of important social issues, as we saw in the Bolt case, the most infamous example.

"The word 'humiliate' is also gone, because it's not possible to have a public discussion about a difficult issue about which different people feel strongly without running the risk that somebody who takes a strong contrary point of view might feel that their view is being mocked. Mockery is a legitimate part of public discussion and part of public commentary."

In his press conference, Senator Brandis said, "You, ladies and gentlemen of the press, mock politicians every day of the week and so you should. It is part of the robustness of democratic exchange"

He went on, "So 'humiliate' is gone as well. Those three words – 'offend', 'insult' and 'humiliate' – describe what has sometimes been called hurt feelings. It is not in the Government's view the role of the state to ban conduct merely because it might hurt the feelings of others. Our democracy should be robust enough for that.

"Intimidate', however, stays, because 'intimidate' is not about hurting peoples' feelings. To intimidate a person is to cause them to be fearful. That is an entirely different state of mind;

it's an entirely different concept. People are right to go about their daily lives free of fear, including fear borne of intimidation because of their race or colour or national or ethnic origin. Intimidation is not an aspect of legitimate public discussion, no matter how robust that discussion is. So intimidation, in our view, should stay.

"Vilification, ... is added to the section. To vilify someone is to incite hatred of them. The absence of a prohibition against vilification has been a gaping hole in Section 18C in its current form".

He said, "... the prohibition of racial vilification constrains public discussion, because to incite hatred is no part of the exchange of ideas. To incite hatred is not an aspect of freedom of speech or intellectual freedom. In Subsection 2 of the exposure draft those two terms are defined. They apply to groups as well as to individuals. They apply to damage to property as well as to the person.

"We believe that the test of reasonableness in this area of the law, as in all others, ought to be community standards. And I might say that in the many discussions I had with various members of - and leaders of ethnic community groups, they themselves were of the view that the community standard test should be reinstated".

Senator Brandis added that Section 80.2A of the Commonwealth Criminal Code exists to protect people from the incitement to racially motivated violence "and of course there is the ordinary law of defamation which protects reputation".

The Government is interested in hearing from all stakeholders on the proposed reforms. Submissions can be made until 30 April 2014 at s18cconsultation@ag.gov.au.

Recent research into Grey Hair and Cognitive Loss ¹

By Shirley Pipitone

This paper summarises recent research into the relationship between hair colour and loss of cognitive function. Significant support now exists for the theory originally proposed by Gsoh (2011) which was widely ridiculed at the time².

The ground-breaking work of Gsoh (2010) demonstrated unequivocally that grey hair has a completely different structure to normal hair prior to greying, regardless of the age at which greying occurs or the reason for the greying. For example, the hair of people known to have developed grey hair suddenly following a significant shock had the same structure as the hair of people which had turned grey as part of normal ageing. All previous work on hair structure had been carried out on people with non-grey hair.

Gsoh (2010) showed that grey hair is tubular with open ends. Non-grey hair, as has been well-known since the advent of the electron microscope, has a solid structure. This radical discovery calls to mind the astonishing disclosure by Armacopeia (1992) that very few medications prescribed for both men and women had actually been tested on women. Researchers had been unwilling to attempt to control for any possible interactions between the medications and women's hormonal fluctuations. Instead, the assumption was made that the medications would be equally as effective for both men and women. Like Armacopeia (1992), Gsoh (2010) stood alone in questioning the universal assumption that grey hair had the same structure as non-grey hair.

Gsoh (2011) proposed a theory relating to cognitive loss and greying of hair. It has long been accepted across all fields of cognitive research from psychology to molecular

neuroscience that greying of hair due to ageing is accompanied by a degree of cognitive loss commensurate with the degree of greying (Weiss 2011). The theory proposed by Gsoh (2011) suggested that the tubular nature and open ends of grey hair allowed a certain amount of leakage of grey matter (in grey haired people) or white matter (in white or silver haired people) into the hair tubes. Gsoh postulated that exposure of the grey or white matter to air at the open ends of the hair tubes resulted in either drying or rotting of the neurones (depending on climatic factors such as ambient humidity and temperature) and, consequently, in the observed loss of cognitive function.

Recent very large-scale research carried out in all continents of the globe has now provided significant support for Gsoh's theory (Grise 2011, Grise 2012).

Grise (2013) has now taken this research even further to reveal that dyeing grey hair successfully reverses the cognitive loss caused by grey hair. These results indicate the great potential hair dyeing offers to reverse the looming economic burden of ageing populations. By reversing the loss of cognitive function caused by greying hair, older people will be able to continue to contribute to society.

References

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- Grise¹, Blanche. (2011). Hair colour and changes in the cognitive function of Caucasians. *Advances in Neuroscience* 28(1) pp 19-47.
- Grise¹, Blanche. (2012). Hair colour and changes in the cognitive function of dark-skinned peoples. *Advances in Neuroscience* 29(2) pp 47-53.
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- Gsoh¹, Shirley. (2011). A theory to explain cognitive loss and greying of hair. *Theories in Neuroscience* 3(4) pp 19-47.
- Weiss¹, Gray. (2011). Greying hair and loss of cognitive function: 50 years of research. *Neuroscience Review* 3(4) pp 347-353.

¹ There is one research result in this summary which is correct but the names of all the authors have been altered for privacy reasons. Which one is correct?

² The theory came to be known as Shirley's Ridiculous Theory Of Greying And Of Cognitive Loss, and was abbreviated to Stroganof Cog Loss.

\$18m to increase remote school attendance

The Government will boost funding for the Remote School Attendance Strategy by \$18 million to help ensure every child attends school every day, aiming to break the cycle of non-attendance and ensure parents and carers take responsibility for educating their children.

Announcing the amount, the Prime Minister who is also Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr Abbott, said, "Because it's hard to be literate and numerate without attending school; it's hard to find work without a basic education; and it's hard to live well without a job.

"Forty remote communities already benefit from School Attendance Officers on the ground working with parents and communities to improve school attendance rates. Attendance rates are up by 14 per cent in the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia which equates to more than 600 additional students in school each day compared to last year.

“An additional 30 communities across Australia will now benefit with a further 210 School Attendance Officers and 60 School Attendance Supervisors to be employed. School Attendance Officers encourage school attendance through a variety of measures, including walking or driving children to school, helping with school lunch preparation and organising uniforms. The officers also work within their communities to promote the benefits of regular school attendance”.

The announcement brings total funding for the Remote School Attendance Strategy to \$46.5 million.

University regulation streamlining should be expedited

In noting the Senate’s decision to refer the Federal Government’s proposed changes to streamline the university regulator - the Tertiary Education Quality & Standards Agency (TEQSA) - to committee, Universities Australia has urged the Committee to complete its work expeditiously.

“The changes proposed by Education Minister Christopher Pyne to streamline TEQSA are consistent with the recommendations of an independent review into university regulation by Professors Kwong Lee Dow and Valerie Braithwaite, commissioned by the previous government,” Universities Australia’s Chief Executive Belinda Robinson said.

“While there may be some technical aspect to be considered, the fact that all parts of the higher education sector have expressed broad support for the reforms should provide the Committee with a degree of reassurance on the merits of the amendments.

“Universities Australia respects the role of the Committee in providing appropriate scrutiny of legislation and looks forward to fully cooperating as part of the process but would not want to see the implementation of these reforms delayed unnecessarily.

“Universities are looking forward to new streamlined arrangements for regulation under TEQSA to be delivered as soon as possible,” Ms Robinson said.

For all the latest from and about Australia's universities visit www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au

Robots and health care

Robots on hospital wards, smart apps on mobile devices and home-monitoring systems will transform our health system a report released by CSIRO has revealed.
<http://www.csiro.au/en/portals/media/digitally-enabled-health-system.aspx>

Acknowledging the past and sharing the future

One year on from the National Apology to Australians affected by forced adoption policies and practices, the National Archives of Australia has launched a website raising awareness of the issue.

The forcedadoptions.naa.gov.au website shares the history of forced adoptions through documents, images and personal experiences. The launch coincided with the unveiling of the National Apology parchment in Parliament House.

"The aim of this website is to increase Australians' understanding of the history and impact of forced adoptions," said David Fricker, Director-General of the National Archives.

"The National Archives' Forced Adoptions History Project enables all Australians to learn more about this shameful aspect of our nation's history. Documenting what happened in this way will help ensure we, as a nation, don't repeat the mistakes of our past.

"We encourage everyone affected by past forced adoption policies and practices to share their experiences. It is only through a diversity of stories and experiences that a rounded history can be created," he said.

People affected can add personal experiences immediately. Once they are moderated by National Archives' staff, they will be published with no capacity for comment or judgement by others.

The website has been created as part of the government's response to recommendations of the *2012 Senate Report into the Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices*.

A touring exhibition, which is the second part of the Forced Adoptions History Project, will be central to the second anniversary of the National Apology on 21 March 2015.

The formal national apology parchment has been preserved and framed by the National Archives. It was designed by calligrapher Gemma Black* and will be on public display in the Members' Hall of Parliament House. It will sit alongside the formal apology parchment for the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants, also designed by Ms Black.

The Forced Adoptions History Project website can be viewed at forcedadoptions.naa.gov.au.
Contact information

1200 academics sign letter to PM on asylum seekers

An open letter to the Prime Minister has been signed by more than 1,200 academics from some 39 Australian tertiary institutions, according to the organisers of a protest against Australia's treatment of asylum seekers.

It states: "This letter reflects the concerns of Australian academics whose areas of expertise include refugee law; political science; international law; history; psychiatry; psychology; education; social work; criminology; economics; business studies; sociology; social policy; nursing; philosophy; literature; linguistics, languages and cultures; the humanities; medicine; legal studies; journalism studies; anthropology; development studies; childhood studies; public health; science; community welfare; music; health care; architecture; urban planning; environmental sciences; and human rights.

"We believe that the current approach to dealing with asylum seekers arriving by boat, especially off-shore detention and claims determination, is seriously flawed and unsustainable.

"It breaches Australia's international legal obligations, including its obligations as a party to the Refugee Convention. It demonstrably harms the physical and psychological health of detainees. Furthermore, it seriously undermines the status and good name of Australia as an international citizen.

"We call on the Australian government to close the detention centres on Manus Island and in Nauru immediately.

Your sincerely,
Academics from Australian tertiary institutions

For a list of signatures, access: <http://academicsforrefugees.wordpress.com/signatures/>
For more information, contact Professor Philomena Murray, Jean Monnet Chair
adpersonam, School of Social and Political Sciences, The University of Melbourne, Victoria
3010. Tel. 03 8344 5151 Email: pbmurray@unimelb.edu.au

Privacy laws change

Important changes to the *Privacy Act 1988* began on 12 March 2014. The changes include a new set of Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) that will regulate the handling of personal information by Australian government agencies, businesses with a turnover of more than \$3 million or those trading in personal information and all private health service providers.

There are also changes to the credit reporting provisions of the Privacy Act and new regulatory powers for the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC), including the power to conduct a privacy performance assessment, accept an enforceable undertaking and, in the case of serious or repeated breaches, seek civil penalties.

Australian Privacy Commissioner Timothy Pilgrim said, "These are the most significant changes to privacy laws in over 25 years and affect a large section of the community. The world has changed remarkably since the late 1980s when the Privacy Act was first introduced, and so the changes were required to bring our laws up to date with contemporary information handling practices, including global data flows.

The new laws require businesses and Australian Government agencies to be more transparent about how they handle personal information. Entities need to have a clearly expressed and up to date privacy policy about the way they handle personal information.

Mr Pilgrim went on, "Being up front with customers and having good privacy practices in place makes good business sense. It is also consistent with community expectations. The OAIC's recent community attitudes to privacy survey revealed that 96% of Australians feel that they should be informed about how their information is handled and protected. Over 60% have decided not to deal with a business due to concerns as to how their personal information will be used, and 23% have decided not to deal with a government agency".

The OAIC received 10,576 privacy inquiries and 1496 privacy complaints in 2012–13 and has already received 30% more complaints in the financial year to date. The OAIC will focus on public education about the reforms during the upcoming Privacy Awareness Week campaign (4–10 May 2014), the primary privacy awareness and education event in the Asia Pacific region.

For more information go to:

<http://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/privacy-act/privacy-law-reform>.

The full report for the **OAIC's 2013 Community Attitudes to Privacy** survey results can be accessed here: www.oaic.gov.au/community-attitudes.

Privacy Awareness Week (4–10 May 2014) is the primary privacy awareness and education event in the Asia Pacific region. For more information see

<http://www.oaic.gov.au/news-and-events/privacy-awareness-week/privacy-awareness-week-2014>

Have your say

TAFE inquiry hears evidence

The Standing Committee on Education and Employment held its first public hearing for the inquiry into TAFE and its operations on March 19 in Canberra. It has received 172 submissions and responses to the Unions Australia questionnaire.

In the first of a series of hearings, the committee heard from TAFE Directors Australia, the peak national body representing Australia's 61 government-owned TAFE institutes which comprises of over 1,000 urban, regional and remote campuses across the country.

Committee chair Ewen Jones MP said "TAFE is a significant contributor to the economy in providing pathways to employment and tertiary education, and the development of skills for the workforce. This hearing is an important part of evidence gathering for the committee in determining where best to focus attention".

Submissions to this inquiry can be made via email to ee@aph.gov.au by Wednesday 9 April, addressing the Terms of Reference which can be found on the committee webpage <http://www.aph.gov.au/ee> .

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

Women and girls in Indian Ocean-Asia Pacific region

A new parliament inquiry will investigate challenges facing women and girls of the Indian Ocean – Asia Pacific region to improve their human rights.

The Human Rights Sub-Committee is keen to hear the perspectives of women from across the region so it can make practical policy recommendations that will make a real contribution to women's empowerment and gender equality. The closing date for submissions is Friday 22 May 2014.

Sub-Committee chair Luke Simpkins said a focus on women and girls was vital to the advancement of human rights, economic development and peace and stability in Australia's region.

He says, "Women make up the majority of the world's poor. One third of women will experience physical violence in their lifetimes, and some are trapped in conflicts where rape is perpetrated as a weapon of war.

"In many countries, women and girls are often denied access to education and excluded from political processes. Fewer than one in five parliamentarians globally are women."

The Sub-Committee will inquire into and report on:

- barriers and impediments to enhancing the human rights of women and girls, especially regarding the impact of family and sexual violence, women's leadership and economic opportunities
- achievements to date in advancing human rights in these key areas
- implications for economic and social development in the region of promoting women and girls' human rights; and
- the effectiveness of Australian programs to support efforts to improve human rights of women and girls in the Indian Ocean – Asia Pacific region.

Currently, around half of Australia's aid budget is spent on initiatives, policies and programs that have a significant focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

The Sub-Committee encourages electronic submissions from anyone with an interest in the issues raised by these terms of reference.

Further information on the inquiry, including how to lodge a submission, is available on the committee's website: www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jfadt and from the Inquiry Secretary, on 02 6277 4318

The Business of Aid in the Indo-Pacific

Opportunities to expand the role of the private sector in promoting economic growth and reducing poverty in the Indo-Pacific region will be examined in a new parliamentary inquiry by the Foreign Affairs and Aid sub-committee of Federal Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade.

With the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade now also being responsible for Australia's overseas aid program, the inquiry will assess the relationship between the private and government sectors.

Sub-committee chair Dr Sharman Stone said some of the poorest and least economically developed countries in the world are in the Indo-Pacific region, with women and children disproportionately affected.

"Lifting people out of poverty and giving them hope of a self-sufficient and sustainable future may be better achieved by using new combinations of traditional aid and private sector engagement," she said.

The inquiry's terms of reference include examining:

- The current role of the private sector in accelerating the pace of economic growth and in reducing poverty in poor countries in the Indo-Pacific region.
- Current Australian Government support for private sector development through bilateral and multilateral investments.
- Legislative, institutional, social and policy constraints that may reduce the ability of private sector agencies to engage in development.
- Additional partnerships, activities or financial instruments the Australian government could use to enhance the role of the private sector in development in the Indo-Pacific region.

- The role of public-private partnerships in leveraging private sector investment in developing countries.
- Risks related to current and possible future approaches to enhancing the role of the private sector in development, and their management.
- The role Australian and international businesses could play to support development and inclusive growth in partner countries.

The sub-committee will receive written submissions until 8 May 2014, after which it will commence public hearings.

Contributions are welcome from all those with an interest in the inquiry. Further details about the inquiry, including how to contribute, can be obtained from the committee's website at www.aph.gov.au/jfadt or by contacting the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 2313 or emailing jscfadt@aph.gov.au.

First public hearing - Northern Australia inquiry underway

The Australian Parliament's Northern Australia Committee held the first public hearing for its inquiry into the development of Northern Australia on 21 March in Parliament House, Canberra. The committee is conducting a parallel inquiry process feeding into the Government's White Paper on the Development of Northern Australia.

Committee Chair Warren Entsch said, "Evidence taken during the inquiry will assist the committee's formulation of practical recommendations for the Prime Minister's Northern Australia Taskforce and White Paper. This public hearing will provide foundational evidence from key government departments and agencies on the regulatory frameworks, policies and programs important to the committee's inquiry."

The committee heard from the following agencies:

- Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development
- National Water Commission
- Department of Defence
- The Treasury
- Department of Health
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- The Australian Federal Police
- Department of Migration and Border Protection

The Regional Australia Institute and the Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation, both Canberra-based research co-operatives, and the Minerals Council of Australia also gave evidence.

The committee's inquiry has received over 200 submissions from regional communities and stakeholders from every sector, with many articulating sophisticated development proposals as well as identifying impediments to them. Submissions and other information on the inquiry is available on the committee website at www.aph.gov.au/jscna

For more information: contact the committee secretariat:

Phone: (02) 6277 4162 Email: jscna@aph.gov.au Website www.aph.gov.au/jscna

Infrastructure project efficiencies

The House Standing Committee on Infrastructure and Communications will commence a new inquiry investigating ways to improve infrastructure planning and procurement and whether governments are prepared for future challenges they face in delivering major projects.

The committee invites interested persons and organisations to make submissions to the inquiry addressing the terms of reference below. **Submissions close on Friday 11 April 2013.**

The terms of reference for the inquiry will focus on the following:

1. Initiatives already operating around Australia at local and state government levels that might lower the cost of planning approvals and reduce timeframes for delivery of projects
2. Whether any initiatives considered by the committee are able or appropriate to be implemented on a broader basis, including at federal level
3. Whether local, state and federal governments are adequately considering the infrastructure challenges that they face and have long-term plans in place to deal with those challenges
4. Whether governments engaging in long-term planning for future infrastructure investment are taking steps to protect the land and corridors that are needed to deliver those infrastructure projects in the future
5. How best to reduce regulatory and other costs that industry faces in competing for infrastructure projects
6. How Australia can increase or deepen the competitive market for infrastructure provision and funding in Australia

Further information on the inquiry, including the full terms of reference and how to prepare a submission can be obtained from the Committee's website at www.aph.gov.au/ic or from the Secretariat on (02) 6277 2352 email ic.reps@aph.gov.au

Inquiry into the Business Innovation and Investment Program

Federal Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Migration will examine the Business Innovation and Investment Program (BIIP) which is designed to increase entrepreneurial talent and diversify business expertise in Australia.

The committee is keen to hear from individuals interested in the inquiry, and particularly those who have participated in the BIIP. The committee will accept submissions until Friday 2 May 2014. Committee chair Louise Markus said skilled migration is a key component of Australia's migration system. "It is important to encourage the creation of genuine and sustainable business opportunities that will generate economic growth, benefiting both the Australian economy and workforce," she said.

The committee will also focus on:

- conditions involved in the decline in rates of application for the BIIP, in light of rates of application for the previous Business Skills Programme.

- current eligibility criteria, with particular regard to the operation of the BIIP points test, and its effectiveness in selecting suitable migrants.
- weighing the size of the current programme against the emphasis placed on other elements of the skilled stream of the migration programme in generating economic growth.

The BIIP is comprised of three visa subclasses: Business Innovation and Investment (Provisional)(188); Business Innovation and Investment (Permanent)(888); and Business Talent (Permanent)(132). The Significant Investor Visa stream is subject to a review by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection and as a consequence will not be included in this inquiry.

Further details about the inquiry, including how to make a submission, can be obtained from the committee's website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/jscm> or by contacting the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4560 or emailing jscm@aph.gov.au.

For more information: contact the Committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4560, via email at jscm@aph.gov.au or visit the inquiry website at: <http://www.aph.gov.au/mig>

New draft rules for public sector examined

Federal Parliament's Public Accounts Committee is conducting an inquiry into the draft rules for the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act). The objective of the PGPA Act is to establish a coherent system of governance across corporate and non-corporate Commonwealth entities, and require these entities and Commonwealth companies to meet high standards of performance and accountability.

Bodies impacted by these changes include Australia Post, the ABC and SBS, CSIRO, the Australian War Memorial, the Treasury, and Centrelink and Medicare, with bodies such as NBN Co also being impacted in some specific areas.

The PGPA Act comes into effect on 1 July 2014, but the rules (otherwise known as regulations) are yet to be finalised and tabled in Parliament. The draft rules, as submitted by the Department of Finance, are now available from the committee's website.

Committee Chair Dr Andrew Southcott MP said that the rules will be critical in determining the scope and operation of the legislation and should promote the proper use of public resources.

The committee's inquiry into the rules will build upon its previous examination of the PGPA Bill before it was passed by Parliament. The committee will investigate whether stakeholders have been properly consulted during development of the draft rules and whether their concerns have been adequately addressed.

The committee will also examine the impacts and purpose of the rules in the context of the broader Public Management Reform Agenda.

Interested persons and organisations were invited to make submissions to the committee's inquiry, addressing the terms of reference, by 24 March but it is expected that the committee would accept late submissions. The preferred form of submissions is in electronic format sent to jcpaa@aph.gov.au.

One public hearing was held on 27 March 2014, and another is scheduled for 7 April 2014.

Further information about the committee's inquiry, including the terms of reference and details on how to lodge a submission, are available on the committee's website at www.aph.gov.au/jcpaa. For information contact the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4615 or email jcpaa@aph.gov.au,

Wine labeling and air services treaties

The Joint Standing Committee on Treaties examined two treaties at a public hearing held on 24 March in Canberra.

One of the treaties under consideration will facilitate the wine trade between Australia and the other members of the World Wine Trade Group (WWTG). There are over 2,500 wine producers in Australia. The industry employs over 30,000 people and contributes \$5.5 billion to the economy. There are also over 6,000 wine growers in the country.

The protocol to an existing agreement on wine labeling will address long-standing trade irritants for Australian wine exporters. Currently Australian winemakers need to make different blends of wines for different markets in order to meet the relevant labeling requirements of importing countries. The protocol will make it easier to market a single blend of wine to the member countries of the WWTG who make up 39 percent of Australia's wine exports.

Committee chair Wyatt Roy said the protocol will improve access for Australian wines in global markets. 'The protocol will provide a consistent approach to wine labeling, minimise unnecessary labeling-related barriers and significantly reduce costs for Australian wine exporters,' he said.

The other treaty establishes an air services agreement between Australia and Croatia. Air service agreements allow the airlines of Australia and other signatory countries to develop international air services, expanding opportunities for trade and tourism. This type of agreement covers such matters as safety, security, competition laws, customs regulations and the commercial aspects of airline operations.

Copies of the treaties and submissions received can be found at: http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_Committees?url=jsct/under_review.htm. Alternatively, anybody interested may email jsct@aph.gov.au or phone (02) 6277 4002.

Bill amends classification system

Minister for Justice Michael Keenan has introduced legislation to reform the National Classification Scheme to identify opportunities for faster, more reliable and cost effective classification of large volumes of content such as mobile and online games.

The reforms remove the need for reclassification when minor changes are made to computer games, such as software updates, bug fixes, or even when a new song is added to a karaoke game.

Films that were modified to play on the small screen of an aeroplane in-flight service, or movies changing from 2D to 3D, will no longer require reclassification.

Festivals and cultural organisations like the 'Australian Centre of the Moving Image' and events such as 'Tropfest' will no longer be required to submit applications to the Director of

the Classification Board for a formal exemption before they screen material, so long as they satisfy criteria in the Classification Act.

The Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Amendment (Classification Tools and Other Measures) Bill 2014 amends the Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995 to implement a number of 'first tranche' reforms that were agreed to by Commonwealth, state and territory Ministers responsible for classification.

These 'first tranche' reforms are based on a number of recommendations from the Australian Law Reform Commission's review into the National Classification Scheme, and will be limited to the content currently regulated by the scheme.

Foreign investment in residential real estate

The House of Representatives Economics Committee has announced an inquiry into Australia's foreign investment policy as it applies to residential real estate. The committee invites submissions to the inquiry by Friday 9 May 2014.

Committee chair Kelly O'Dwyer said, "Australia's foreign investment policy as it applies to residential property is intended to boost the supply of new housing and thus provide both economic and social benefits. However there have been concerns raised in the wider community from time to time that foreign investment in Australian real estate is causing a distortion in the market and making housing less accessible and affordable."

"This inquiry is not focused on investors from any particular country into Australia's real estate market. The committee will take a very broad and holistic approach to examining whether the current policy settings in this regard are delivering the best possible outcomes for Australia."

The committee will inquire into and report on:

- the economic benefits of foreign investment in residential property
- whether such foreign investment is directly increasing the supply of new housing and bringing benefits to the local building industry and its suppliers
- how Australia's foreign investment framework compares with international experience
- whether the administration of Australia's foreign investment policy relating to residential property can be enhanced.

For the full terms of reference and advice on making submissions see the committee's website at www.aph.gov.au/economics or contact the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4587 or email: economics.reps@aph.gov.au

Shirley Pipitone writes:

The basic ANUEF Facebook page is now set up. It's very, very basic. I've sent invitations to the few people whose email addresses I have - which means you. If you are already on Facebook, you know what to do.

If you aren't yet on Facebook, I will be writing some instructions soon but it is actually easy.

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>

ANU Archives supporters can find updated news on the ANU website at <http://www.archives.anu.edu.au/news-and-events-1>

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 is held in the office. 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

Next edition of *Emeritus*, the ANUEF Newsletter, will be published in May, 2014.