

**Southern Cross Group
Further Information re Annex 5 to Primary Submission of 20 January 2006
to Citizenship Bill Inquiry**

From: Bassim.Blazey@dfat.gov.au [mailto:Bassim.Blazey@dfat.gov.au]
Sent: 23 January 2006 05:14
To: Anne MacGregor
Cc: MacGregor, Anne; Michael.LEstrange@dfat.gov.au; bob.nash@dfat.gov.au;
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Lyndall.McLean@dfat.gov.au
Subject: Re: Info through Missions on Government Inquiries for Expats

Dear Anne,

Thank you for your email of 6 January 2006 concerning the role of DFAT's overseas missions in publicising Australian government inquiries to Australian expatriate communities.

In relation to Australians overseas, DFAT has a primary objective of protecting their interests by delivering a professional and wide-ranging consular service in support of those who may find themselves in distress, or may require assistance in other countries. DFAT continues to accord a very high priority to advancing and protecting the interests of Australian expatriates internationally within the scope of this consular service.

In addition to the DFAT and Smartraveller websites, information of more broad ranging interest to Australians generally, including expatriate Australians, can be found at <http://www.australia.gov.au>. This highly informative site offers quicklinks to all Government departments and agencies, including Parliament, the Australian Taxation Office and Centrelink. The quicklink to Parliament provides a full list of all Committee inquiries and reports which can be searched alphabetically by subject. In addition, the site has special links for Australians travelling and living abroad, with a wealth of information on issues such as citizenship, marriage, Centrelink international services and electoral enrolment.

In addition to the range of web links available, DFAT's overseas missions distribute hard copy materials on behalf of government agencies when requested. The proceedings of Senate Committees are regarded as proceedings of Parliament and, therefore, it is the responsibility of the Parliament to decide on appropriate methods of publicising the proceedings. In the event that a Senate Committee requested the assistance of DFAT in publicising an inquiry through its overseas missions, DFAT would use official material produced by the Committee itself for this purpose. In the absence of such a request, it is not DFAT's practice or role to take special measures to publicise Parliamentary or other inquiries overseas. As you are aware, DFAT missions also provide many formal and informal opportunities for Australian expatriate communities to come together and discuss issues of interest to them. These events and forums offer valuable opportunities for Australian expatriates to keep themselves informed of a variety of issues affecting them, including Senate inquiries, or to seek further information in relation to them.

We appreciate the work of the Southern Cross Group, in support of many Australian expatriates and I wish you well in the significant work you do on their behalf.

Yours sincerely

Bassim Blazey
Assistant Secretary
Consular Policy Branch
DFAT

