CHRISTMAS ISLAND AGREEMENT AMENDMENT BILL 1983

Date Introduced: 11 May 1983
House: House of Representatives
Presented by: Hon. T. Uren, Minister of Territories and Local Government

Purpose

To amend the Act establishing the Christmas Island Phosphate Commission providing for termination of the Commission in accordance with an agreement between Australia and New Zealand signed on 22 November 1982.

Background

Christmas Island has in recent decades been administered as an Australian Territory. The principal economic activity on the island is phosphate mining, managed by the British Phosphate Commission as managing agents. Following the Sweetland Report in 1980, an agreement between Australia and New Zealand of 9 June 1981 permitted replacement of that management by a company owned and controlled by the Australian Government. (For the ratifying Bill, and earlier history, see Bills Digest for the Christmas Island Agreement Amendment Bill 1981.) The 1981 Bill was enacted as Act No.107 of 1981, and approved amendments to the Australia-New Zealand agreement of 1958 which had the effect that the managing agents operating the phosphate industry would no longer be the British Phosphate Commissioners but would be such agent as was jointly agreed upon by Australia and New Zealand (in fact, the Phosphate Mining Co. of Christmas Island Ltd.)

The present Bill is complementary to the Bill approving appointment of new agents. It provides for approval of winding-up of the Christmas Island Phosphate Commission and the disposal of its assets. The phosphate deposits are to be both owned and mined by the Phosphate Mining Co. of Christmas Island Ltd. The two functions were previously separate.

This Bill is identical to the Christmas Island Agreement Amendment Bill 1982 introduced to the House of
Representatives on 9 December 1982, but which lapsed on the dissolution of Parliament.

The amendment agreement was done at Canberra by representatives of Australia and New Zealand on 22 November 1982.

Main Provisions

Clause 2 of the Bill provides for commencement on a date to be proclaimed.

The termination agreement signed by Australia and New Zealand on 22 November 1982 is defined in clause 3 and its text is appended as Schedule 2 to the Christmas Island Agreement Act 1958 by clauses 4, 6 and 7. Schedule 1 sets out the text of the 9 June 1981 agreement between Australia and New Zealand for adjustment of managing agents.

Clause 5 amends section 7 of the 1958 Act to provide for the Christmas Island Phosphate Commission's cessation of function.

For further information, if required, contact:

12 September 1983

Law & Government Group

LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH SERVICE