



MEDIA RELEASE

SENATOR KIM CARR

Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research

Friday, 19 December 2008

AUSSIE EXPORTERS TO BENEFIT FROM INTERNATIONAL TREATIES

Australian exporters will have extra help to protect their valuable intellectual property overseas with the signing of two key intellectual property (IP) treaties - the *Singapore Treaty on the Law of Trademarks* (Singapore Treaty) and the *Patent Law Treaty*.

Senator Kim Carr, Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, today said the importance of these international treaties lies in the significant benefits they provide for local exporters.

"The good news is that they encourage more user-friendly systems by simplifying the process of obtaining and maintaining trade marks and patents," Senator Carr said.

"The Singapore Treaty also reflects the worldwide growth in e-commerce by providing consistent rules for electronic lodgment of trade mark applications.

"By simplifying these processes Australian exporters will reap the rewards of lower application costs and greater flexibility and security when protecting their IP.

"Signing on to the treaties offers a positive example for Australia's trading partners, thereby increasing the capacity for regionally based trade," Senator Carr said.

Senator Carr said that following Australia's ratification of the Singapore Treaty, it will now enter into force on 16 March 2009. Member States include Denmark, Singapore and the USA.

"The timing of the ratification will be greatly appreciated by businesses trying to adjust to the global financial crisis," Senator Carr said.

Australia and the World Intellectual Property Organization also signed an agreement to continue the role of IP Australia as an International Searching Authority and International Preliminary Examining Authority until 31 December 2017. Australia has maintained this role for nearly 30 years.

"Considerable international prestige results from IP Australia's standing as an International Authority. This reputation provides further opportunities to influence the international IP community in the interests of Australian business," Senator Carr said.

Australia continues to consider signing other international IP treaties which will benefit Australian business both at home and overseas.

For more information on treaties visit www.wipo.int/treaties/en

**Media contact: Patrick Pantano, Minister's Office, 0417 181 936
Tania Kalogianis, IP Australia, 02 6283 2266**