

APPOINTMENT AS ASSISTANT TREASURER

Senator Nick Sherry, Senator for Tasmania, was this morning sworn in as Assistant Treasurer of Australia by the Governor-General, Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC, at Government House, Canberra.

"It is an incredible honour to be selected by the Prime Minister to become the Assistant Treasurer of Australia."

"I would take this opportunity to acknowledge the former Assistant Treasurer, Chris Bowen and wish him well in his new Cabinet post. I am also looking forward to working even more closely with Treasurer Wayne Swan as the Government continues to develop its response to the worst global recession since the Great Depression," the Assistant Treasurer said.

As Assistant Treasurer, Senator Sherry will join the Expenditure Review Committee and will take a lead role in the Rudd Government's response to the work of the Australia's Future Taxation System review, led by Treasury Secretary Ken Henry, due at the end of 2009.

"The Henry tax review, the first systemic analysis of our entire tax system in generations, will present a major policy and implementation task and I look forward to working on this challenge with the Treasurer."

Before being appointed as Assistant Treasurer, Senator Sherry was the Rudd Government's Minister for Superannuation and Corporate Law, the first Ministerial-level appointment with responsibility for Australia's superannuation system.

"I would also like to take the opportunity to thank those involved in my time as Minister for Superannuation and Corporate Law, including all the community and industry stakeholders and the officials at Treasury, ASIC, APRA, the ATO and the Royal Australian Mint," the Assistant Treasurer said.

"Holding all of these responsibilities during one of the toughest years for the superannuation system since it became compulsory was very challenging but very rewarding, as was working on corporate regulation issues during the global financial crisis."

During the last 18 months, the Rudd Government has seen a number of major reforms in the superannuation and corporate law areas, including:

- a comprehensive Green Paper, Council of Australian Government's agreement and the *National Consumer Credit Protection Bill 2009* to enact simple, standard, clear national

regulation of all financial services and consumer credit which will significantly boost the level of consumer protection for 5.7 million Australian households, including a new credit licensing regime and responsible lending protections that will help ensure Australia avoids a sub-prime lending scenario;

- the establishment of the Cooper Review into the *Governance, Structure, Efficiency and Operation of Australia's Superannuation System*, the first comprehensive review into Australia's compulsory \$1.1 trillion superannuation system, focused on removing unnecessary costs, fees, commissions and complexity and boosting returns and retirement incomes;
- the development of the *Financial Services Modernisation Bill 2009*, enacting federal laws to regulate margin lending, debentures and trustee corporations;
- a major reshaping of the law regulating executive termination benefits, known as "golden handshakes" that will crack down on executive rewards for corporate failure and the establishment of a full Productivity Commission review into broader executive remuneration issues;
- the national regulation of credit rating agencies, a key weakness in the global regulatory framework that contributed to the severity of the global financial crisis;
- a major funding increase of more than \$178 million for the Australian Securities and Investments Commission and a doubling of the commission from three to six members;

- the development and passage of world-leading short selling laws, endorsed by the international body of securities regulators;
- the signing of a world-first mutual recognition agreement with the United States;
- the development of Australia's corporate social responsibility agenda by providing funding to establish a world-first Responsible Investment Academy, gaining Australia membership of the International Advisory Board to the Global Reporting Initiative and providing funding to the St James Ethics Centre for it to become Australia's focal point for the Global Reporting Initiative and the UN Global Compact;
- establishing Australia's first peak Superannuation Advisory Council;
- establishing the Financial Services Working Group to simplify the product disclosure arrangements for Australia's financial services, helping all Australians better understand financial products; and
- passing laws to provide tax-free lump sum access to superannuation for terminally ill Australians; provision of minimum drawdown relief for account-based pensioners; progressing substantial reform on the auto-rolling of lost superannuation accounts in order to re-unite Australians with their lost super and the establishment of a superannuation clearinghouse.

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