STUDY TOUR REPORT

JOAN HALL, MP
MEMBER FOR MORIALTA

VISIT TO LONDON, MADRID, BILBAO, PARIS, REIMS
SEPTEMBER 19 – OCTOBER 12, 2002

OBJECTIVES:

The principal purpose of travel was to focus on issues related to ‘regional development’ in three main areas – 

- future trade, employment and economic benefits to South Australia specifically in food and wine, tourism and agriculture
- restoration and preservation of historical buildings and sites
- transporting, monitoring and storage of nuclear waste

In addition to these three areas, discussion on Parliamentary and Constitutional reform was an important issue.

VARIATIONS IN PROGRAM:

A rail strike in London cancelled out appointments with the Australian Tourism Commission and private tourism operators due to difficulty for all parties in moving around Central London and inner suburbs.

In Spain, contact with participants with ‘Tasting Australia’ became impossible to co-ordinate due to travel times and distance.

DOCUMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS OBTAINED: – (a selection of)

English Heritage – users guide and services, plus a selection of material covering protecting archaeological sites, the historic east Midlands, Cabinet War Rooms, scheduling monuments, sites which have shaped island history – Isle of Wight, historic London – mighty monuments and tranquil retreats.
The history of Chartwell and the Church family
Briefing notes of aspects of British Nuclear Fuel, including – what is nuclear waste, and transporting nuclear materials

Briefing notes on radioactive waste in France, international waste management organisational framework and contacts

ANDRA 2000 annual report

Disposal Facility for very low level radioactive waste – non-technical summary of the environmental impact study

Essential series – the centra de l’Aube disposal facility

2000 Report on the Centre de l’Aube facility

Centre de la Manche – disposal facility

Gender use of time – 3 European studies (European Commission)
Women and work (European Commission)
The new agricultural policy – European agriculture – a policy for the new millennium
Reconciliation of work and family life, and the quality of care services (European Commission)
One hundred words for equality (European Commission)
Organic farming (European Commission)
2002 programme for the Third World Congress – Rural women, plus a variety of papers and presentations from the 3 day conference

Guggenheim Museum

Spanish Football Association

Names of organisations or parliaments visited:

Parliament of Westminster
Representatives of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, London
Representatives of the British Conservative Party, London
Dr Rachel Walker, World Nuclear Association, London
Mr Stephen Rossides and representatives of the National Farmers Union, London
Mr Oliver Pearcey, English Heritage, London
Dylan Thomas Cultural Centre, Swansea
British National Trust, Chartwell, Kent
Attendance of the Third World Congress – Rural Women, Madrid
Australian Ambassador, Mr Tim George, Madrid
Austrade Commissioner, Madrid
Officials from Guggenheim Centre, Bilbao
President and Marketing Director of the Olive Oil Exporters Association, Madrid
President, Vice President and General Manager of the Spanish Football Association
Minister and Permanent Delegation to UNESCO, Mr Matthew Peek, Paris
First Secretary, Australian Embassy, Ms Heidi Bootle, Paris
Mr Nicholas Baker, Austrade, Paris
Ms Lyn Tuit, SA Tourism, Paris
Public Affairs Director, Centre d’Laube, North Eastern France
Marketing Director, Bollinger, Reims District
Ms Audrey Campos, Perrier Laurent, Reims District

SUMMARIES OF THE STUDY AREAS PURSUED

LONDON

Nuclear industry

The prospect of storage of nuclear waste in South Australia has been and continues to be an important subject of political debate. My visit to the London based World Nuclear Association and discussions with Dr Rachel Walker provided factual information on a range of questions on the nuclear industry. In particular, we covered the issues of future trends and usage, on the three types of radioactive waste, transport and safety issues, monitoring and management of radioactive waste plus community information and participation.

The similarities with levels of public debate appear to vary greatly throughout the world.

The ‘high user’ nuclear countries appear to have a more informed and less emotional debate than appears to be the case here in South Australia thus far. The involvement and community support apparent for nuclear facilities in areas of Great Britain and France was interesting. In particular the intense effort of the nuclear industry and individual companies to involve, provide technical and specialised information and work with community groups appears to be gaining considerable acceptance.

The public debate in our State would be well served if some of the practices adopted in Britain and France were accepted here as a way to sensibly pursue the debate – based on fact, and a co-operative approach by all stakeholders.
**Agriculture**

A meeting with Mr Stephen Rossides and two technical officers of the National Farmers Union was held to discuss the aftermath of the Foot and Mouth Disease in the United Kingdom. The lessons learned, initiatives and policy changes for the future, plus the cost of implementing recommendations from several major reports were interesting and concerning. It was quite clear that many farming communities and regional centres are still struggling with the financial fallout from the FMD outbreak – particularly those whose properties were quarantined, even though their flocks were not affected.

A disease insurance for farmers is currently being discussed at Government and industry level, although currently there are no details available on the cost and implementation process of such a scheme. A major enquiry into FMD and the future has recently been presented to the Government, and recommendations and changes are expected to be announced early in 2003.

It is important we monitor any changes and recommendations that are adopted in Britain from this devastating FMD outbreak, and there is no doubt training of personnel and the highest quarantine standards must remain critical priorities for Australia.

There was considerable interest from the NFU group in the recent ‘Exercise Minotaur’ conducted in Australia in September 2002, and they appreciated the additional information that was provided to them on the success and issues that came from this ‘simulated operation of FMD outbreak in Australia’.

**Restoration and preservation of historical buildings and sites**

Discussions with English Heritage and a group from British National Trust were of specific interest. In particular, the philosophy of English Heritage, which not only looks after historic properties and sites, but believes it has a serious role to play in ‘managing change’ rather than ‘stopping change’. This approach seems to be a balanced approach as it relates to preserving history, rather than sometimes is the case in South Australia, when hard line positions are adopted with an apparent philosophy of ‘no change’.

As an organisation, English Heritage is described as a ‘non-departmental public body’ that is sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and that works as an advisor to Government on the ‘historic environment’. EH works through the office of the Deputy Prime Minister, and works with the Departments of the Environment, Food, Rural Affairs and Trade and Industry. EH has a Chief Executive, a Chairman, and board of 16 commissioners. It manages more than 400 historic properties and monuments, has a large membership, considerable private sector support and funding, as well as receiving Government funding through direct grants – plus funds provided by the national lottery.
The funding ‘split’ of Government lottery funds is worth taking a closer look at in terms of policy – there are five categories that receive 20% of a national lottery, established in 1995 to distribute specifically to designated recipients and national heritage is one of the beneficiaries.

Given the significant number of historic buildings and sites throughout Great Britain, the role and funding of organisations such as EH and National Trust are most important. It appears they enjoy considerable Government, private sector and community support.

**SPAIN**

**Madrid**

My attendance at the Third World Conference for Rural Women demonstrated to me very clearly the importance of agriculture, rural industries, regional development and education and access to information across the world.

Australian women made up the second largest delegation at the conference, with more than 90 countries and 1500 delegates attending the three day event.

Australia was represented by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator the Hon Judith Troeth who spoke on the opening day.

Topics as set down in the program covered:

- Rural women in the global village
- Gender
- Sustainable development and food security
- Globalisation
- Poverty and Food Security
- Social and Territorial equity
- Role of rural women in the agricultural sector and in rural environment
- Rural and farmer women
- Dynamics of demography
- Migrations, ageing depopulation and statistical sources
- Technologies for research and innovation on agricultural, rural and fisheries development
- Effect of the media on the rural development and the new information technologies
- The role of rural women in agricultural and sustainable rural development
- Leadership and involvement of rural women
- Gender and public policies
Women’s involvement in the Association networks in the rural Spanish regions
Association and co-operatives in the agrofood sector
Multifunctionality in agriculture and new opportunities for employment in the rural sector
International co-operation and development aid

Although excellent translation facilities were provided, language difficulties sometimes made communications challenging. The Conference venue was some 30kms from the centre of Madrid, and transport difficulties provides some frustrations each day.

Despite a number of challenging situations, international networks established and research material obtained over the conference period will prove valuable to all delegates on more general subjects. However, attendance at the conference demonstrated that Australia’s reputation as a ‘clean and green’ producer reflected the high international reputation of our rural producers.

Olive industry

Austrade organised an industry briefing on ‘dwarf olives’ and the impact the success of this commodity has had in Spain’s regional areas. Spain produces more than half of the world’s dwarf olives and the growth in this specific industry has provided significant employment opportunities in rural areas. However, of concern to the olive industry in Spain is the serious lack of skilled workers in some regions, and the need for more specialised training to take place.

The development of dwarf olive production has been led by investment and involvement of non-traditional growers. Challenges and issues still under debate in Spain involve longevity of the dwarf olive tree, ownership of ‘new’ trees, working relationships with the universities, and employment shortages.

Trade opportunities

Discussions with Austrade made it quite clear that Spain is very interested in growing its trade opportunities with Australia. Exports to Spain in 2001 were $845m, and imports accounted for $749m. There was significant knowledge of South Australian ‘product’, and a recognition of a number of synergies with our State. It was accepted that information technology, education and training, food, wine and the marine sector, plus tourism, would provide significant trade opportunities in the future.

Spanish Soccer Federation
A meeting with the President and senior officials of the Spanish Football Association provided an impressive opportunity to promote the magnificent facilities of the Hindmarsh Soccer Stadium. The President accompanied the Spanish Olympic Soccer team to Adelaide in September 2000 – he is a Vice President of FIFA and is impressed with Adelaide as a destination.

We canvassed the possibility of a Spanish soccer team playing ‘friendly’ games in Australia, and in particular a ‘friendly’ at Hindmarsh. We also canvassed the justice of the Oceania region receiving automatic entry to the World Cup in the future – both discussions were positive.

**BILBAO**

A large regional city in the Basque province, Bilbao is the home to the internationally acclaimed Guggenheim Centre which opened in September 1977. The “Guggenheim” has attracted millions of visitors to Bilbao, was built at a cost of more than $100 million US and has refocussed their Bilbao as an international tourist destination.

The infrastructure requirements have significantly changed in Bilbao since the opening of the Guggenheim, and the focus of activities in the city have changed. Tourism, festivals, sport activities and events, conferences and conventions have all increased in number.

The profile of Bilbao from an industrial provincial city has changed since September 1997 and increasingly the city identifies itself as a city and centre of culture, education, commerce and tourism.

**PARIS**

An Austrade briefing at the Australian Embassy in Paris provided a unique overview as to the significant trade opportunities between South Australia and regions of France. Australia has a well deserved reputation as a producer of fine wines, red wine in particular in France, and our ‘product’ is well regarded. Our exports to France in 2001 were $1,205million, and it is recognised that there are many opportunities in the future.

It is also recognised that opportunities exist in the area of horticultural product, seafood, meat and game, processed food and additional wine. The education and training sector has also been identified with significant potential for growth.
**REIMS DISTRICT**

**Centre de L’Aube**

The visit to this ‘state of the art’ disposal facility for radioactive waste was instructive and impressive.

The debate in South Australia over whether or not we will accept radioactive waste to be stored underground in a remote area of our State is in stark contrast to the reality of Centre de L’Aube. The low and intermediate level waste is stored above ground, in large cylinders. The facility itself is located in prime farm land within the premium wine district of Champagne. The opponents of the proposed facility in South Australia would find a visit to this facility in a thriving agricultural district with strong community support somewhat confusing and different.

There is no doubt whatsoever the facility in Centre de l’Aube, commissioned in 1992, is effectively managed under strict controls laid down by the French National Radioactive Waste Management Agency ANDRA). It is claimed that the safety mechanisms, monitoring processes, community reporting and involvement is among the best in the world.

This facility has the capacity to accommodate 1 million cubic metres of waste, and this is estimated to be well into the middle of the 21st century. It covers an area of 95 hectares, which includes 30 hectares specifically for disposal purposes. There are more than 150 employees at the site.

I have returned to Adelaide with a significant amount of information provided by ANDRA which may be of interest to Members when the debate commences.

**Wine Industry**

Two visits to Wine Houses in the Champagne District included the House of Bollinger and the House of Laurent Perrier. Travelling through this premium wine district of France was of great interest as South Australia quite correctly enjoys the reputation of the premium wine State of Australia.

Our reputation and status of a fine wine producing State was well recognised in this district, and indeed within these two Wine Houses.

The value of tourism to the area was well accepted, and I observed many similarities to our State’s wine regions.
**CONCLUSION:**

Further information about this report is available from the Morialta Electorate Office, telephone: 8365 4224.

JOAN HALL  
MEMBER FOR MORIALTA