

Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters (Sweden) Regulations 2001 2001 No. 120

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

STATUTORY RULES 2001 No. 120

Issued by the Authority of the Minister for Justice and Customs

Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Act 1987

Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters (Sweden) Regulations 2001

Section 44 of the *Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Act 1987* ("the Act") provides that the Governor-General may make regulations prescribing all matters required or permitted by the Act to be prescribed or necessary or convenient to be prescribed for carrying out or giving effect to the Act. Paragraph 7 (2) (a) of the Act provides that regulations may provide that the Act applies to a specified foreign country subject to any mutual assistance treaty between that country and Australia that is referred to in the regulations.

The Act enables Australia to grant or request the following kinds of international mutual assistance in criminal matters: taking of evidence, search and seizure, arrangements for witnesses to give evidence or assist in investigations and the location, restraint and forfeiture of proceeds of crime.

The Regulations give effect in Australian domestic law to the Treaty between the Government of Australia and the Government of Sweden on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters, signed at Stockholm on 18 December 1998 ("the Treaty"). The Treaty, once in force, will bind Australia and Sweden in international law to provide each other with the kinds of assistance listed above, and to provide documents and other records; locate and identify persons; serve documents; and provide other similar assistance consistent with the objects of the Treaty and not inconsistent with the law of the requested state.

In accordance with the Government's policy of greater parliamentary involvement in Australia's treaty-making processes, the Treaty was tabled in Parliament, together with a National Interest Analysis (NIA), on 16 February 1999. The period of fifteen sitting days following tabling has elapsed, allowing the Government to take binding treaty action in relation to the Agreement.

Article 22 of the Treaty requires that the Parties to the Treaty exchange instruments of ratification in Stockholm as soon as possible. Australia's requirement for the Treaty's entry into force is the making of the Regulations. The Treaty enters into force on the first day of the second month after exchange of the instruments of ratification. The exchange of instruments of ratification will occur during September 2001. The Treaty will enter into force on 1 November 2001. Accordingly, 1 November 2001 is the commencement date of the Regulations.

As in all of Australia's mutual assistance in criminal matters treaties, the obligation to provide assistance is qualified by certain internationally accepted safeguards, chief amongst which are that assistance shall not be granted in relation to political or military offences or where a request is made for the purpose of prosecuting or punishing a person on account of his or her race, sex, religion, nationality or political opinions. Assistance shall also be refused where grant of a request would prejudice the sovereignty, security, national interest or other essential interests of the requested state.

Details of the Regulations are as follows:

Regulation 1 specifies the name of the Regulations.

Regulation 2 provides for the Regulations to commence on 1 November 2001, which is the date on which it is planned the Treaty will enter into force.

Regulation 3 provides that the Mutual *Assistance in Criminal Matters Act 1987* applies to Sweden subject to the scheduled Treaty.

The **Schedule** to the Regulations contains the text of the Treaty between the Government of Australia and the Government of Sweden on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters, done at Stockholm on 18 December 1998.

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