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The Rudd Government has released its response to an inquiry into the current and future directions of Australia's service industries.

The Government's comprehensive response stems from the recommendations of the report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Economics, Finance and Public Administration, "[Servicing our Future](#)".

Craig Emerson

The committee report was the first time the Australian Parliament had carried out a comprehensive investigation into what makes the service economy tick.

The Government's response addresses the committee's 14 recommendations in areas including skills shortages, climate change and its impact on the tourism industry and student visa requirements.

The Rudd Government recognises that a strong and efficient service economy is crucial to Australia's long term economic prosperity.

That's why, for the first time, the Rudd Government has established a ministerial position specifically created to address issues relating to the service economy.

As the report notes, the service economy employs around 85 per cent of the workforce.

However, in an environment of increasing global financial stress, it is crucial for Australia's service industries to maintain and improve their global competitiveness, particularly through trade.

In any trade negotiation the Australian Government will give much greater emphasis to addressing the "behind the border" issues in international trade, especially issues involving the services sector.

The services sector plays a critical role in Australia's export performance. Services comprise more than three quarters of our economy but only 20 per cent of our exports, so there's big potential for further development.

The Rudd Government is committed to implementing a reform agenda to build a modern, competitive economy that is capable of meeting the challenges of the 21st Century.

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