



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

MEDIA RELEASE

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**Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Foreign Affairs and Aid Sub-Committee**

*Chair: The Hon Dr Sharman Stone MP
Deputy Chair: Senator Alex Gallacher*

AGRICULTURAL CO-OPERATION FOR PROSPERITY IN THE INDO-PACIFIC REGION

Over many years, Australian departments and agencies have worked closely with research and technical partners from across the Indo-Pacific region to improve food security and biosecurity protection for the region's growing populations.

The Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade's Foreign Affairs and Aid Sub-Committee is conducting an *[inquiry into the role of development partnerships in agriculture and agribusiness in promoting prosperity, reducing poverty and enhancing stability in the Indo-Pacific region](#)*.

On Monday in Canberra, the Sub-Committee will meet with the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), key agencies working to improve food quality, production systems and biosecurity through agricultural co-operative arrangements across the region.

Sub-Committee Chair the Hon Dr Sharman Stone MP said Australia's agricultural co-operation activities have played an important role in enhancing the availability of safe and healthy food through reducing crop and animal pests and disease.

"We know that access to fresh nutritious food is crucial to improve health across the region. Encouraging innovation at the village level through sustainable farming is also better for people's wellbeing. Access to good food will reduce the incidence of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, which is a growing problem across the region," Dr Stone said.

The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources works to achieve these outcomes through harmonisation of laws regulating illegal logging and fisheries, and working to improve animal health and diagnostic capacity to uphold standards of biosecurity protection under a range of bilateral agreements.

The CSIRO has the largest single agricultural research capability in Australia. Its submission reports that technical innovation is a major driver of agricultural led growth, as long as it works to 'create solutions and opportunities for farmers, consumers and businesses' and 'help move food and agricultural systems to a more inclusive and sustainable pathway'.

Dr Stone noted that in addition to promoting regional prosperity there are other advantages to Australian producers.

"The research and technical innovations designed to improve environmental sustainability will open new markets for both Australian and regional farms and fisheries," Dr Stone said.

The public hearing will be held on Monday 29 February 2016:

Time: 5:15 pm to 6:30 pm
Venue: Committee Room 1R3
Parliament House, Canberra

A live audio broadcast will be available at http://www.aph.gov.au/News_and_Events/Watch_Parliament

For background: Contact the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Secretariat on (02) 6277 2313 or visit jscfadt@aph.gov.au for further details about the inquiry, including copies of submissions and how to contribute.

For media inquiries: contact the Sub-Committee Chair, the Hon Dr Sharman Stone MP on (03) 5821 5371 (Electorate Office) or 02 6277 4477 (Parliament House).