



Final report tabled: Governance in the Indian Ocean Territories

Stimulating economic activity through extra supports to tourism and improvements to land management practices are focuses of a report tabled today by the [Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories](#) on governance in the Indian Ocean Territories (IOT).

Committee Chair, Mr Luke Simpkins MP, said this report builds on the recommendations made in 2015 through an interim report to increase economic activity, and addresses long standing issues with service delivery and governance.

"It is well known that governance in the IOT has been subject to ad-hoc reform over the years, resulting in a unique administrative model. Many residents are dissatisfied with the delivery of services in the Territories and have identified the lack of opportunity for input as a key concern," Mr Simpkins said.

"This has created frustration for both the Administrator of the Indian Ocean Territories and residents as no one has a clear understanding of the role of the Administrator or their powers to resolve problems on-island."

Mr Simpkins said the report makes 19 wide-ranging recommendations, the last of which is to investigate fundamental governance reform, and whether the Territories' prospects might be better served by incorporation into an Australian mainland state or territory.

Key recommendations include:

- Establishing a Service Delivery Arrangement to facilitate access to tourism support services provided by Tourism Western Australia;
- Initiating a comprehensive geological survey on Christmas Island to inform land development and responsible water management;
- Reviewing the land trust on the Cocos (Keeling) Islands to determine legal ownership and control of all land to facilitate appropriate development;
- Implementing a formal consultation protocol and complaints handling mechanism for Service Delivery Arrangements;
- Identifying all delegated and legislated powers vested in the Administrator and maintaining the information in a register;
- Reviewing local government to determine if there is scope to streamline and amalgamate functions; and
- Seeking formal advice from the governments of Western Australia and the Northern Territory about incorporation of the IOT into their state or territory.

The report is available to download from the Committee website:

http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/National_Capital_and_External_Territories/Indian_Ocean_Territories

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