



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

MEDIA RELEASE

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

*Chair: Mr Luke Simpkins MP
Deputy: Senator Anne McEwen*

Human rights on the agenda as Parliament comes to the people

Parliament comes to the people this week with a public hearing on human rights issues confronting women and girls in the Indian Ocean-Asia Pacific region being held at a Sydney girls' high school.

The two days of public hearings will be at Auburn Girls High School in Sydney on Thursday 21 and Friday 22 August.

A number of specialist organisations will provide evidence at the hearing as part of a Federal parliamentary inquiry by the Human Rights Sub-Committee of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade.

"This is an important inquiry and we're very happy to bring parliament to the people and particularly to these young women who will soon begin their careers and contribute to our Australian community," Sub-Committee chair Luke Simpkins MP said.

"A focus on women and girls is vital to the advancement of human rights, economic development and peace and stability in Australia's region."

"Aside from the hearings and roundtable discussions involving non-government human rights and aid organisations, there'll be a question and answer session with the students."

"I expect some challenging questions from young women who may well be our future community leaders and may one day think about entering politics themselves."

On Thursday, the Sub-Committee will hear evidence from Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Caritas, World Vision, Action Aid, the Victorian Immigrant and Refugee Women's Coalition, Shakti Australia, Medecins Sans Frontieres, Childfund Australia and the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions.

On Friday, the Sub-Committee will hold a roundtable discussion with the Church Agencies Network, Results International Australia, the Women's Plan Foundation and Care Australia.

Further information on the inquiry is available on the Committee's website at www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jfadt.

Please note that the public hearing will be held in the school hall, which can be most easily entered via Hunter Street (although this entrance is not suitable for a person with limited mobility). If you need assistance on the day, please call the Secretariat on 0413 085 958.

For media comment: contact the Sub-Committee Chair, Mr Luke Simpkins MP, on (02) 6277 4009 or via Mr Bill Coghlan on the same number. For all other inquiries, contact the Inquiry Secretary, on 02 6277 4318 or visit the committee website at www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jfadt