



# PARLIAMENT of AUSTRALIA

## MEDIA RELEASE

### JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AND EXTERNAL TERRITORIES

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## New inquiry into the strategic importance of the Indian Ocean Territories

The Parliament's External Territories Committee today announced a new inquiry to examine the enduring strategic role of Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, together known as the Indian Ocean Territories.

Committee Chair, Mr Andrew Hastie MP, commented "The Indian Ocean Territories are of strategic importance to Australia because of their proximity to the Asia region. The Territories straddle major shipping lines that are essential to Australia's trade and defence. It is time that we re-examine the Territories and their place in Australia's national security architecture."

"The Committee calls for submissions on the strategic importance of the territories, including maritime surveillance, military contingencies, investment in government infrastructure, and the implications for the territories' residents."

The Committee will examine:

- the changing regional security environment and security contingencies;
- defence capability in the territories and associated infrastructure development;
- the scope of maritime, air and other cooperation with Indo-Pacific partners; and
- impacts on local communities.

Further information about the inquiry can be accessed via the Committee's website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/ncet>.

**For media enquiries:** Please contact the Committee Chair, Mr Andrew Hastie MP on (08) 9534 8044 (electorate office).

**For background information:** Please contact the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4355 or email [jscncet@aph.gov.au](mailto:jscncet@aph.gov.au)