



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

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

MEDIA RELEASE
Issued: 20 February 2012

*Chair: Hon Laurie Ferguson MP
Deputy: Hon Philip Ruddock MP*

Melbourne hearing to focus on Australia-Vietnam human rights talks

The federal parliament's Human Rights Sub-Committee will discuss Australia's human rights dialogues with Vietnam and China with Vietnamese and Chinese pro-democracy and human rights groups in Melbourne on Friday, 24 February.

Human Rights Sub-Committee chair Laurie Ferguson said, "One of the pleasing aspects of this inquiry is the interest that has been displayed by concerned ethnic communities."

"At public hearings to date, the sub-committee has discussed the effectiveness of the Australia-China dialogues with NGOs, Chinese human rights organisations, and representatives of the Tibetan, Uyghur, and East Turkestan communities", he said.

"This hearing provides an opportunity to examine the Australia-Vietnam dialogues with Vietnamese human rights and democracy NGOs and activists," Mr Ferguson said.

Also appearing at the hearing are pro-democracy advocates from the Federation for a Democratic China and a member of the Victorian Parliament.

The Human Rights Sub-Committee will discuss the involvement of non-government organisations, the roles of participating agencies, parliamentary participation, alternative human rights mechanisms and reporting requirements.

Details of the public hearing are as follows:

**Friday, 24 February
9.00 am to 3.30 pm
Committee Room G.6
Victorian Parliament, 55 St Andrews Place, East Melbourne**

Members of the public are welcome to attend. For a program and more details, visit the Committee's website:

http://www.apf.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_Committees?url=jfadt/hrdialoguechinavietnam/index.htm

The hearing will also be audio webcast live at:

http://www.apf.gov.au/News_and_Events/Watch_Parliament

There is still an opportunity to contribute to this inquiry as the Committee will continue to accept submissions.

For media comment: please contact the Sub-Committee Chair, the Hon Laurie Ferguson MP on (02) 9829 7477 (Electorate Office) or (02) 6277 4920 (Parliament House)

For further information: please contact the Committee secretariat on (02) 6277 2313, via email at jscfadt@aph.gov.au or visit the inquiry website at: <http://www.apf.gov.au/jfadt>