



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

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

MEDIA ALERT

Issued: 2 November 2005

Chair: Bruce Baird MP
Deputy Chair: Warren Snowden MP

BHP Billiton to attend public hearing on expanding trade relations with North Africa

Public hearings on 4 November at Parliament House, Canberra

BHP Billiton and other key exporters such as Meat and Livestock Australia will attend a public hearing in Canberra next Friday (4 November) for the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade inquiry into **Expanding Australia's trade and investment relations with North Africa**.

Others to attend the hearing include representatives of the Australian dairy industry, the Libyan People's Bureau, the ambassador of Tunisia and the consul-general of Morocco.

The inquiry was established by the Trade Sub-Committee chaired by Bruce Baird to investigate ways to expand Australia's trade and investment relationship with the economies of North Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia). Australia currently exports a range of goods to the North African region, including meat, cheese and curd, crude animal and vegetable materials and coal. Egypt, in particular, is one of Australia's largest markets for wheat exports.

In recent years, Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia have all experienced strong economic growth. As a result, broader opportunities may exist in these markets for Australian exports. In 2004, Australia's exports to Egypt exceeded \$645 million, while exports to Algeria and Morocco together totalled \$100 million.

The inquiry will make particular reference to:

- the nature of Australia's existing trade and investment relationships with the region;
- likely future trends in these relationships; and
- the role of the government, particularly that of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Austrade, in identifying and assisting Australian companies to maximise opportunities in North Africa as they emerge.

Public hearings in Canberra

When: Friday 4 November

Where: Canberra — Committee Room 1R4, Parliament House

Time: 10.00am – 5.00pm

- BHP Billiton;
- Meat and Livestock Australia;
- Australian Dairy Industry;
- The Libyan People's Bureau;
- Ambassador of Tunisia; and
- Consul-General of Morocco

For media comment, please contact the Sub-Committee Chair, Bruce Baird (Member for Cook, NSW), on (02) 6277 4814 (Parliament House) or (02) 9525 8200 (electorate office).

For all other inquiries, including the full terms of reference, please contact the Trade Sub-Committee Secretary, Kate Burton, by phone on (02) 6277 4628, via email at jscfadt@aph.gov.au or visit the inquiry website at: www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jfadt/northafrica