



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

**MEDIA RELEASE**

Issued: 6 February 2013

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

*Chair: Mr Michael Danby MP*  
*Sub-Committee Chair: Mr Nick*  
*Champion MP*

## **Australia's relationship with Timor-Leste**

Australia's relationship with Timor-Leste will be examined in a new inquiry conducted by the Foreign Affairs sub-committee of federal parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade.

Australia has been closely involved with the development of Timor-Leste since its independence from Indonesia in 2002, and provides significant ongoing support to its population of 1.1 million.

Chair of the Foreign Affairs sub-committee Nick Champion said "Now that the Australian-led International Stabilisation Force is withdrawing from the country, an examination of Australia's role in future support and development of Timor-Leste will be of value in informing Australia's foreign policy.'

Australia is Timor-Leste's largest development partner and in 2012-13 was budgeted to provide \$127.1 million.

"Australia is providing assistance to create new institutions and to support social development and reduce poverty," Mr Champion said.

Federal parliamentarians have visited Timor-Leste as part of parliamentary delegations, the most recent being in November 2011, and also to observe elections in March and April 2012. However, the last comprehensive inquiry into Australia's relationship with Timor-Leste was in 2000.

Mr Champion said it "It is therefore timely for there to be a broad review of Australia's relationship with this important neighbour."

The inquiry terms of reference include examining;

- bilateral relations at the parliamentary and government levels;
- aid, including support with governance issues;
- economic issues, including trade and investment;
- cultural, educational and scientific relations and exchanges;
- people to people links; and
- defence cooperation and those aspects of regional security that affect Timor-Leste.

The sub-committee will receive written submissions until 28 March 2013 after which it will commence public hearings. Contributions are welcome and encouraged from organisations and individuals.

**For media inquiries** contact the Sub-Committee Chair, Mr Nick Champion MP on (02) 6277 4451.  
**For all other inquiries** contact the Inquiry Secretary, John Carter, on 02 6277 2313 or visit the Committee website.