



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

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

Chair: the Hon. Bruce Scott MP
Deputy Chair: Michael Hatton MP

Inquiry into Australia's Defence relationship with the United States – final public hearing

The Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade is holding its final public hearing for the inquiry into Australia's defence relationship with the United States on 9 September. The final public hearing will seek to address gaps in evidence to the inquiry identified in the Issues Paper, released in March 2005, and to seek comment on recent developments in the Asia Pacific region.

The Defence sub-committee had commenced the inquiry during the 40th Parliament and the terms of reference for the inquiry have been extended into the current Parliament.

The *Security Treaty between Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America* (the ANZUS Treaty) which came into force on 29 April 1952 is a key element supporting Australia's national security. The Treaty has operated for more than 50 years and remains relevant in a strategic environment increasingly challenged by terrorism and non-state actors.

Since World War II, Australia and the US have developed strong defence relations. In the period since the 1991 Gulf War, a new level of defence cooperation has emerged, encompassing Australian involvement in Somalia and the US led coalitions in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The evidence to the committee is overwhelmingly in favour of the alliance and the security that it provides for Australia. There was some discussion about the need to enhance the Treaty to more broadly reflect contemporary strategic requirements and of the dangers to Australia of being seen as a subordinate alliance partner.

The Issues Paper describes the material under consideration by the committee. In particular, the committee draws attention to alternative positions, and identifies where there are gaps in the evidence. At the conclusion of each section, the committee summarises the views presented in the evidence, and discusses possible directions arising from these discussions.

The committee has invited Professor William Tow of the Department of International Relations at the Research School of Pacific & Asian Studies, The Australian National University, to address any recent shifts in the strategic environment in the Asia Pacific region. The committee has also invited the Departments of Defence and Foreign Affairs and Trade to address topics raised in the Issues Paper and more recent developments in the relationship with the United States.

The committee website contains contact details and a link to the Issues Paper at:
<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jfadt/index.htm>

For media comment, contact the chair Hon Bruce Scott MP on (02) 6277 2368 or mob. 0427 023 513.

For further information, phone the inquiry secretary, Dr Margot Kerley on (02) 6277 4629 or via email at jscfadt@aph.gov.au.