



## ***Submissions invited for inquiry into outdoor advertising***

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs is calling for submissions to its new inquiry into the regulation of billboard and outdoor advertising.

Billboards and different forms of outdoor advertising are increasingly dominating public spaces. However, questions have been raised regarding the effectiveness of current systems to monitor and regulate appropriate content for outdoor advertising. Billboards are predominantly self-regulated by an industry code, although some may also be subject to the National Classification Scheme that determines the classification of certain publications, films and games.

Committee Chair Graham Perrett MP commented that “Unlike television and print advertising, there is no way of ‘switching off’ from a billboard. Billboards and other forms of outdoor advertising dominate our public spaces and can be seen by all members of the community.

“Some large billboards are designed to shock and contain graphic images. Others have suggestive slogans or advertise products aimed at an adult audience. These types of advertisements can be outside schools, along highways, or beside shopping malls.”

Mr Perrett continued “Of the top ten complained-about advertisements in 2010, four were situated on billboards. Consequently it is timely to consider whether the current self-regulatory system is meeting community expectations for this particular type of advertising. We need to consider what content is appropriate for viewing by an unrestricted audience, and also what type of advertising we as a nation wish to have occupying our public spaces.”

The inquiry has been referred by the Attorney-General, Robert McClelland. The Committee will examine the effectiveness of the self-regulatory scheme for outdoor advertising by considering:

- the existing self-regulatory scheme for advertising
- whether the current arrangements, including the Industry Codes administered by the Advertising Standards Bureau, meet community concerns about billboard advertising
- trade practices and fair trading legislation in all jurisdictions that contain consumer protection provisions that prohibit false, misleading and deceptive advertising
- technical developments in billboard advertising, if any
- the rate and nature of complaints about billboard advertising
- any improvements that may be made to current arrangements, and
- the desirability of minimising the regulatory burden on business.

Interested persons and organisations are invited to make submissions to the inquiry addressing the above terms of reference. For more information about making submissions, please visit [www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/spla/outdoor%20advertising/index.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/spla/outdoor%20advertising/index.htm) or contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 2358. Submissions close on **18 February 2011**.

The Committee will hold a series of public hearings and roundtable events after this date, and anticipates reporting its findings mid-year.

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**For media comment**, please contact the Committee Chair, Mr Graham Perrett MP, on (07) 3344 2622 or 0408 883 312.

**For all other information**, please contact the **Secretariat of the Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs**:

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