



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON CLIMATE CHANGE,
WATER, ENVIRONMENT AND THE ARTS

Inquiry into the Australian coastal zone

MEDIA RELEASE

Issued: 22 October 2008

*Chair—Jennie George MP
Deputy Chair—Mal Washer MP*

Leading climate change scientist to discuss sea level rise

The House of Representatives Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts Committee will hear from Professor Will Steffen, Executive Director, ANU Climate Change Institute, at a public hearing in Canberra on 23 October 2008 as part of its inquiry into climate change and environmental impacts on Australia's coastal zone.

"According to Professor Steffen, the science surrounding the sea level rise issue is in 'a state of rapid change' and has 'progressed significantly' since the publication of IPCC data last year," Committee Chair Ms George said.

"Professor Steffen's submission to the inquiry notes that 'the observed rate of sea level rise is tracking at or near the upper limits of the envelope of IPCC projections'. Professor Steffen further emphasises that 'the biggest uncertainty in the projected rates of sea level rise is associated with the behaviour of the large polar ice sheets'."

"The Committee will be seeking an update from Professor Steffen on the latest science concerning sea level rise," Ms George said.

The inquiry will examine existing policies and programs related to coastal zone management, ways to promote sustainable use of coastal resources, and strategies for climate change adaptation. The Committee is also looking at ways to promote sustainable coastal communities, as well as governance and institutional arrangements for Australia's coastal zone.

Members of the public are welcome to attend the hearing, which will also be webcast (audio only) on: <http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting>.

Public hearing schedule on 23 October 2008

Venue: Committee Room 1R4, Parliament House, Canberra

10.45am Professor Will Steffen, Executive Director, ANU Climate Change Institute

Further details on the inquiry can be obtained from the Committee's website at

<http://www.aph.gov.au/ccwea>.

For **media comment**, please contact the Committee Chair, Ms Jennie George MP, on 02 6277 4260 (Canberra) or 02 4262 6122 (electorate office)

For **background information**, please contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4580 or by email at ccwea.reps@aph.gov.au.