

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE
NATIONAL CAPITAL AND EXTERNAL TERRITORIES**

Inquiry into the Territories Law Reform Bill 2010

Chair: Senator Kate Lundy

NORFOLK ISLAND LAW REFORM REPORT

Federal Parliament's External Territories committee today presented its report on the Inquiry into the Territories Law Reform Bill 2010. The Bill will amend the *Norfolk Island Act 1979* (Cwlth) to implement significant reforms aimed at improving governance structures and strengthening accountability mechanisms for Norfolk Island.

The Bill will also amend the *Christmas Island Act 1958* (Cwlth) and the *Cocos (Keeling) Islands Act 1955* (Cwlth) to provide a vesting mechanism for powers and functions under Western Australian laws applied in the Indian Ocean Territories.

Senator Lundy, Committee Chair said "The commonwealth has an ongoing responsibility to the Australian citizens of Norfolk Island and this Bill represents an important step forward by strengthening transparency and accountability to ensure the future good governance of Norfolk Island. During the inquiry, the committee examined the practicality of the components of the Bill and considered the evidence provided to it by the Government of Norfolk Island, and Norfolk Island individuals and organisations. The committee recommended that the Bill be passed and made four additional recommendations."

Key recommendations of the report include:

- That the Territories Law Reform Bill 2010 be passed
- That the Attorney-General's Department continue to consult with the Government of Norfolk Island, its Administration and the Norfolk Island community on the content of regulations that establish the reform elements of the Bill. This includes the timeframe for implementation of regulations.
- Improving the timeframe for Commonwealth scrutiny of Norfolk Island legislation.
- That a review be undertaken of items under Schedules 2 and 3 of the Norfolk Island Act.
- That Schedule 1, Part 2 – Amendments relating to elections, be removed from the Bill and deferred until 2011.

In addition to the issues covered in the Bill, the committee also received evidence on other matters of importance which are examined in the final chapter of the report.

A copy of the report is available from the committee's website at:

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/ncet/lawreformbill2010/report.htm>

For media comment: please contact the Committee Chair, Senator Kate Lundy, on (02) 6277 3334 or 0407 458 882 (Electorate Office, Canberra).