

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS****Inquiry into representation of the Territories in the House of Representatives**

Should the NT and ACT have a guaranteed minimum of two Members each in the House of Representatives?

PUBLIC HEARING – DARWIN, FRIDAY 29 AUGUST, 2003

Federal Parliament's Electoral Matters Committee is holding a public hearing on Friday 29 August 2003 in Darwin to take further evidence for its inquiry into the representation of the Territories in the House of Representatives.

The Committee is examining whether the *Commonwealth Electoral Act* should be amended to provide for a minimum of two seats each in the House of Representatives for the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory. This follows the recent determination by the Australian Electoral Commission that the Northern Territory's entitlement will reduce from two House of Representatives seats to one for the next federal election.

The hearing will be held in the Litchfield Room of the Legislative Assembly, Darwin, commencing at 8.30am. It is expected that witnesses will include:

- Mr David Tollner MP, Member for Solomon
- Mr Warren Snowdon MP, Member for Lingjari & Australian Labor Party, NT Branch
- Representative of the NT Chief Minister's Department
- Australian Democrats, NT Branch
- The Hon Grant Tambling

The Chair of the Electoral Matters Committee, Mr Petro Georgiou MP (Member for Kooyong, Vic) said, "The House of Representative's Northern Territory members and others have called for the minimum representation of the Territories in the House to be increased".

"These calls for a guaranteed two seats, particularly from those in the Northern Territory, are based on issues associated with population estimates and the entitlements of the Territories in comparison to the States, as well as the geography of the Northern Territory and the appropriate representation of its urban and regional areas," Mr Georgiou said.

Last week, the Committee held a public hearing in Canberra and took evidence from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Australian Electoral Commission regarding the process for determining representation in the House of Representatives. A transcript of this hearing, as well as submissions to the inquiry will be progressively loaded onto the Committee's website.

For media comment, please contact:

Electoral Matters Committee Chair, Petro Georgiou MP, via (03) 9882 3677

For further information on the inquiry:

Frances Gant, Inquiry Secretary on (02) 6277 4209, or visit www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/em/

The members of the Electoral Matters Committee are:

Mr Petro Georgiou MP (*Chair*) (Liberal Party of Australia, Kooyong, VIC)
Mr Michael Danby MP (*Deputy Chair*) (Australian Labor Party, Melbourne Ports, VIC)
Senator Andrew Bartlett (Australian Democrats, QLD)
Senator George Brandis (Liberal Party of Australia, QLD)
Senator Brett Mason (Liberal Party of Australia, QLD)
Senator Andrew Murray (Australian Democrats, WA)
Senator Robert Ray (Australian Labor Party, VIC)
Mr John Forrest MP (National Party of Australia, Mallee, VIC)
Mr Daryl Melham MP (Australian Labor Party, Banks, NSW)
Ms Sophie Panopoulos MP (Liberal Party of Australia, Indi, VIC)