



## ATT: National Media

PUBLIC HEARING ON MONDAY 25 JUNE 2001

# Has Fels gone too far?

*Inhibiting reasonable commerce? ACCC chief to face questioning*

The House of Representatives Economics Committee will hold a public hearing with **Professor Allan Fels** and other representatives of the ACCC this Monday, 25 June.

The hearing will follow up issues raised at a prior public hearing (30 March 2001), but also raise new questions about whether the ACCC may be over-stepping the bounds of its powers to the detriment of business.

House Economics Committee Chair **David Hawker** says the Committee will be questioning Professor Fels on the matter.

"While consumer protection is vital and the ACCC has done much excellent work, we have to be careful that the pendulum hasn't swung too far," Mr Hawker says. "Some suggest the ACCC has become a power accumulator, and is not afraid to use that power in an arm-twisting, bullying fashion. The question being raised is: is the ACCC now too powerful? Is it prosecutor, judge and jury, or at least *acting like it is*?"

"The other aspect is: does the ACCC have its finger in too many pies? Is the reach of the ACCC too great? Does it have too many things on at any one time to be able to do any of them well? Is it time to split up the ACCC? These are critical questions that need to be asked."

Mr Hawker says the Committee is also seeking submissions and evidence from businesses and organisations who feel the ACCC may be over-stepping the mark.

**WHO:** ACCC appears before House Economics Committee

**WHERE:** **House of Representatives Committee Room 2R3**

**WHEN:** Monday 25 June 2001, 10:00am - 12:15pm

The hearing will be telecast on in-house TV monitoring within Parliament House (channel 10); broadcast on in-house radio (99.1FM); and webcast on the Net (click webcast link on [www.aph.gov.au](http://www.aph.gov.au)).

### To arrange comment before or after the hearing:

David Hawker, MP (Chair)

(Parliament House) 02 6277 4837; (Electorate Office) 03 5572 1100; (mobile) 0418 528 314

### Further information:

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### House Economics Committee Membership

**Chairman:** Mr David Hawker MP

**Deputy Chair:** Ms Anna Burke MP

**Members:** Mr Anthony Albanese MP  
Ms Teresa Gambaro MP  
Mrs Kay Hull MP  
Mr Mark Latham MP

Ms T Plibersek MP  
Mr Christopher Pyne MP  
Hon Alex Somlyay MP  
Dr Andrew Southcott MP