



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Foreign Affairs Sub Committee

MEDIA ALERT
Issued: 30 September 2008

Chair: Senator Michael Forshaw
Sub Comm. Chair: Michael Danby MP

Australian Federal Police to discuss security in the ASEAN region at Melbourne public hearing

The Australian Federal Police will be giving evidence on its role in assisting ASEAN nations when it appears before Federal Parliament's Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee on Thursday, 2 October in Melbourne. The Sub-Committee is inquiring into Australia's relationship with ASEAN.

Announcing the public hearing, to be held in the Legislative Council Committee Room in Melbourne's Parliament House, Sub-Committee Chairman Michael Danby said the committee was keen to discuss the AFP's multi-faceted engagement with ASEAN countries.

"The AFP is actively engaged in the ASEAN region. For example it is co-hosting, with Indonesia, a conference on combating the use of the Internet by terrorists and will also be providing training aimed to assist ASEAN police forces to combat people smuggling. It is also involved in an Asia region law enforcement program in Vietnam, and in regional cooperation teams and bomb data centres in Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand." Mr Danby said. "Security in the ASEAN region is of vital importance to Australia and the committee will be keen to be briefed by the AFP on the security situation and challenges faced by the law enforcement and counter terrorist agencies of the region."

The committee will also be receiving evidence from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. "DAFF has advised that Australia's agricultural trade will expand due to income growth in ASEAN and through the implementation of a free trade agreement with ASEAN. The committee will be interested in the department's view of which sectors will benefit," Mr Danby said.

The ASEAN region is host to various plant and animal diseases including bird flu. "DAFF has a role in preserving Australia's quarantine border and preventing diseases such as foot and mouth disease and bird flu from entering Australia. The committee is keen to be briefed on Australia's efforts to maintain the biosecurity of its borders," Mr Danby said.

Also appearing will be representatives from the ACTU and from the Australian automotive industries. "The committee has heard evidence that following the free-trade agreement with Thailand, that country changed the rules which subsequently adversely affected Australia's opportunity to export vehicles to Thailand. The committee will explore this issue with witnesses from the ACTU and from the Australian automotive industries," Mr Danby said.

The hearing in the **Legislative Council Committee Room**, Parliament House, Spring Street, Melbourne, starts at 9.30am and be webcast live on: <http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>

9.30am	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
10.20am	Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy
11.10am	Australian Federal Police
12.00noon	Australian Council of Trade Unions
2.00pm	Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries and Federation of Automotive Products Manufacturers
2.40pm	Australian Services Union, Community and Public Sector Union and Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union
3.25pm	Burma Campaign Australia
4.00pm	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation

The program will continue with public hearings in Sydney on Thursday, 6 November. Submissions to the inquiry and transcripts of the public hearings are available on the Committee's website.

For media inquiries, contact the Sub-Committee Chairman, Michael Danby MP on 03 9534 8126.
For all other inquiries, contact the Sub-Committee Secretary, John Carter, on 02 6277 4306 or visit the committee website at www.aph.gov.au/jfadt