



## ***Ships in the spotlight over the holiday season - Crimes at Sea inquiry***

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs has announced a series of public hearings, and seeks submissions for its inquiry into the arrangements surrounding crimes committed at sea. The Chair of the Committee, Mr Graham Perrett MP, said that ‘as we head into the holiday season, it’s a good time to reflect upon whether Australia’s arrangements for the safety of people travelling abroad on ships are adequate.’

The International Cruise Council of Australasia reported that Australian cruise passenger numbers grew by a record 34 percent in 2011 compared to 2010. Mr Perrett commented that ‘well over half a million Australians are expected to holiday on a cruise ship this season. While most of them will have a safe and happy time, we need to make sure that they are protected to the fullest extent of Australian law’. Mr Perrett added that, ‘tragically, in the case of Ms Dianne Brimble, the protections appear to have been lacking, which draws into question the adequacy of reporting, investigation and prosecution arrangements for crimes committed at sea.’

The inquiry was referred to the Committee by the Attorney General, the Hon Nicola Roxon, as part of the Government’s response to the coronial inquest into the death of Ms Dianne Brimble. The Committee is focusing on crimes against the person, which include fatal and non fatal offences, and sexual assault. The Committee is concerned about the scope of the issue, and seeks submissions from victims of crimes committed at sea. A special hearing for victims of crimes at sea will be held in Brisbane in the New Year.

Mr Perrett said that ‘the cruise industry will obviously be a valuable contributor to this inquiry, and the Committee will also be holding a public hearing for industry representatives in Sydney’.

Details of the public hearings are as follows:

- **Thursday 31 January 2013, 9am-5pm, Parliament House, Sydney**
- **Friday 1 February 2013, 9am-5pm, Parliament House, Brisbane**

The Committee invites submissions to the inquiry by **Friday 23 November 2012**. If you require additional time to prepare a submission, please contact the Secretariat by phone **02 6277 2358** or email **spla.reps@aph.gov.au**.

For the information about the inquiry, including the Terms of Reference and advice on making submissions, see the Committee’s website at [www.aph.gov.au/crimesatsea](http://www.aph.gov.au/crimesatsea) or contact the committee secretariat on **(02) 6277 2358**.

**For media comment**, please contact the Committee Chair, Mr Graham Perrett MP, on (07) 3344 2622 or 0434058200.

**For background information**, please contact the **Secretariat of the Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs:**

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