



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Human Rights Sub-Committee

MEDIA ALERT
Issued: 6 February 2007

Chair: Sen Marise Payne
Deputy: Maria Vamvakinou MP

Frontline agencies questioned on Pacific aid

Public hearing: Canberra, 9 February 2007

Key Commonwealth agencies involved in the delivery of Australia's \$766 million aid program in the Pacific will appear at a public hearing of federal parliament's Human Rights Sub-Committee in Canberra on 9 February 2007, commencing at 9:00am.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, AusAID, the Department of Defence, the Attorney-General's Department and the Australian Federal Police will outline their roles and experiences in delivering aid programs in a range of Pacific countries.

In its submission to the inquiry, AusAID said that the Pacific faces a number of security and development challenges.

Human Rights Sub-Committee Chair, Senator Marise Payne, said that "the public hearing will provide a valuable opportunity to investigate how Australia's aid program is helping the Pacific to meet some of those challenges."

"These are some of the key agencies on the frontline of delivering our aid program to the Pacific," Senator Payne said. "Following on from our recent hearing with Pacific high commissioners and non-government organisations, we will be asking what results we are achieving from our aid dollars and where those dollars are best directed for the future."

The Director of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions will also appear before the committee.

This hearing will be webcast at <http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>

Public hearing on 9 February 2007

Venue: Committee Room 2S1, Parliament House, Canberra

Time: 9:00am–1:00pm

For media inquiries, contact the Sub-Committee Chair, Senator Marise Payne on 02 6277 3810 (Parliament House).

For all other inquiries, contact the Inquiry Secretary, Sara Edson, on 02 6277 4547 or visit the committee website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jfadt/pacificaid/index.htm>