



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works

***Chair: Ms Janelle Saffin MP***

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## **Public Works Committee to examine the Christmas Island new housing program**

The Public Works Committee is set to conduct an inquiry into the Christmas Island New Housing Program. The Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government is seeking approval from the Committee to proceed with phases two and three of the housing program, having already received approval to proceed with the first phase, the construction of 16 dwellings.

The Department says the new housing program will address a critical housing shortage on Christmas Island, as the population increases in response to an escalation in immigration activity. The construction of a further 16 new dwellings as part of projects two and three would reduce pressure on the rental market and house essential staff required for the provision of essential policing, health, education and administration services. Cabinet approved funding of \$26.6 million over three years to enable the Department to address the housing shortfall on Christmas Island.

The Committee's Chair, Janelle Saffin MP, said the Committee inspected the housing program sites when it visited Christmas Island in June 2011.

"The Committee received a detailed briefing from the Department when it inspected the proposed housing sites on Christmas Island. We are pleased with the progress of the housing project and look forward to hearing further from the Department about projects two and three", Ms Saffin said.

Full details on the proposal, as well as a link to the Committee's recent report on public works on Christmas Island are available on the Committee's website: [www.aph.gov.au/pwc](http://www.aph.gov.au/pwc)

### **Submissions to the inquiry close on Friday, 16 December 2011.**

The Committee will be holding a public hearing on the next stages of the Christmas Island housing program early next year. Details of the hearing will be announced soon.

**NB** the Public Works Committee is neither involved in the tendering process nor the awarding of contracts. Enquiries on those matters should be addressed to the Department of Defence.

**For interview:** Contact the Chair's media advisor, Lee Duncan on 0448 158 150.

**For further information,** including how to make a submission, the public hearing times, and copies of submissions when they become available, please visit the Committee website <http://www.aph.gov.au/pwc> or contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4636.