



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON CLIMATE CHANGE,
WATER, ENVIRONMENT AND THE ARTS

Inquiry into the Australian coastal zone

MEDIA RELEASE

Issued: 13 May 2009

*Chair—Jennie George MP
Deputy Chair—Mal Washer MP*

Federal department to discuss health impacts of climate change on coastal communities

The House of Representatives Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts Committee will hear from the Department of Health and Ageing at a public hearing in Canberra on 14 May 2009, as part of its inquiry into climate change and environmental impacts on Australia's coastal zone.

“The Department of Health and Ageing submission notes that ‘climate change related threats to health that are of particular importance to coastal communities include sea level rise, storm surges, and, in some areas, flooding, cyclones and vector-borne disease,’” Committee Chair Ms George said.

“The department's submission also notes that ‘population migration as a result of sea level rise has significant health implications’, and that ‘population migration away from coastal areas, particularly islands, is likely to disrupt cultural and social systems’, which has ‘important ramifications for communities in the Torres Strait Islands’”.

“The Committee will be interested to discuss the potential impacts of climate change on the health and wellbeing of our coastal communities,” Ms George said.

The inquiry will examine the environmental impacts of coastal population growth and the impact of climate change on coastal areas, including sea level rise. The Committee is also looking at ways to encourage sustainable coastal communities, and at governance and institutional arrangements for Australia's coastal zone.

Members of the public are welcome to attend the hearing, which will also be webcast (audio only) on: <http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting>.

Public hearing schedule on 14 May 2009

Venue: Committee Room 1R4, Parliament House, Canberra

10.45am Department of Health and Ageing

Further details on the inquiry can be obtained from the Committee's website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/ccwea>.

For **media comment**, please contact the Committee Chair, Ms Jennie George MP, on 02 6277 4260 (Canberra) or 02 4262 6122 (electorate office)

For **background information**, please contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4580 or by email at ccwea.reps@aph.gov.au.