



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MEDIA ALERT

Issued: 26 June 2001

Standing Committee on Primary Industries and Regional Services

Story on Tuesday 26 June 2001

Bioprospecting

Can prospecting among Australia's plants, animals and microbes to find valuable substances be turned into a money-spinner and job creator?

The House of Representatives Primary Industries, chaired by Fran Bailey MP, is investigating the potential of bioprospecting, bioprocessing and other related biotechnologies to create new industries and jobs, especially in regional Australia.

Because of recent technological advances and better understanding of the natural world, it is now possible to thoroughly and systematically 'search' biological materials for useful chemicals and activity. These materials can be used to create or improve products ranging from pharmaceuticals to sunscreens to plastics.

And because of our great biodiversity, Australia is perfectly placed to be at the forefront of this process.

The House Primary Industries Committee will hold a public hearing in **Canberra** this **Wednesday, 27 June**, to hear **AFFA's (Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Australia)** views on developing high technology industries in regional Australia based on bioprospecting, bioprocessing and other related biotechnologies. This hearing will be the committee's second with AFFA. It will focus on AFFA's vision for the development of regional bioindustries, and the regimes that are being put in place to improve access to biological resources and ensure that the benefits from exploiting them are shared fairly and equitably.

Public Hearing: **House of Representatives Primary Industries Committee**
Development of high technology industries in regional Australia based on bioprospecting, bioprocessing and other related biotechnologies

Where: **Committee Room 1R3, Parliament House, Canberra**

When: **Wednesday 27 June, 5 p.m. – 6.00 p.m.**

5.00 p.m. Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Australia

The Committee is looking at the contribution bioprospecting could make to regional industry development, and identifying any barriers that exist and how maximum benefits could be secured. The Committee is also interested in the impact that such industries might have on the environment.

As part of its inquiry, the Committee is also visiting regional areas to hear the views of bioprospectors, researchers, and business people, and to see existing industries based on bioprospecting.

For more details, including Submissions and Terms of Reference, contact the House Primary Industries Secretariat on 02 6277 4500 or visit the House Primary Industries Committee web site:
www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/primind/

To arrange media comment, contact **Fran Bailey**, House Primary Industries Committee Chair, directly on 02 6277 4280, or House Committees' media adviser, Geoff Dodd, on (02) 6277 2063