



Indigenous Law and Justice Inquiry to Hold Public Hearing in Dubbo

Federal Parliament's Public Accounts and Audit Committee will recommence its inquiry into the provision of legal aid services to Indigenous Australians with a public hearing tomorrow in Dubbo.

Chair of the Committee, Mr Bob Baldwin MP, announced the Committee's first public hearing into Indigenous law and justice matters of the new Parliament: "This hearing continues hearings held in Canberra, Sydney, Darwin Alice Springs and Adelaide during the previous Parliament on Indigenous law and justice matters and provides new members with the opportunity to acquaint themselves with conditions on the ground."

The Committee will also be seeking to be updated on two major policy developments in the provision of law and justice services to Indigenous Australians, first the tendering out of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services which is underway in Victoria, Western Australia and Queensland and second the announced increase of Family Violence Prevention Legal Services two of which are to be located in the western New South Wales locations of the Dubbo Local Government Area and Brewarrina/Bourke.

"The Committee is interested in the access of Indigenous Australians, and particularly Indigenous women, to legal services in regional, remote and urban areas. Besides taking evidence from the local Aboriginal Legal Service, it will hear from a Community Legal Centre, and a Family Violence Prevention Legal Service based in Walgett as well as community organisations that help Indigenous people and use legal services."

"The public hearing phase of the inquiry will continue tomorrow with an inspection of community justice programs in the remote community of Yuendumu in the Northern Territory and a hearing in Perth."

PUBLIC HEARING

Returned & Services League Club, Cnr Brisbane and Wingewarra Sts, Dubbo

Wednesday, 30 March 2005

- 10.00 am Western Aboriginal Legal Service
- 10.55 am Western NSW Community Legal Centre
- 11.40 am Walanbaa Yinaar Wharoo Family Violence Prevention Legal Service
- 1.25 pm East Dubbo Women's Group
- 2.00 pm Grace Cottage Aboriginal Family Health Service
- 3.00 pm Legal Aid Commission of New South Wales (Dubbo Region)

For media comment: please contact Mr Bob Baldwin MP on telephone.

For **more information**, contact the inquiry secretary on telephone (02) 6277 4615 or visit the Committee's website at www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jpaa/index.htm