



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW INQUIRY

Building Australia's relations with Indonesia

Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee is to conduct a major inquiry into Australia's relationship with the Republic of Indonesia.

The Committee is to review the political, strategic, economic, social and cultural aspects of the bilateral relationship, considering both the current nature of that relationship and opportunities for it to develop.

Announcing the new inquiry, the Committee Chairman, Mr David Jull MP, said this latest review reflected the Committee's longstanding interest in Indonesia - Australia's largest and most influential neighbour.

"It is timely that we review the full scope of our relationship," Mr Jull said. "There have been enormous changes in the political, social and economic landscape of Indonesia since our previous major report in 1993.

"We now need to consider the challenges brought about by those developments as well as the opportunities for building mature bilateral relations which can accommodate differences of view from time to time."

Indonesia's size and strategic location mean it will always play a leading role in the South East Asia region and will continue to engage Australia's national interest. Yet, few adjacent countries in the world possess such enormous differences in history, culture and economic development as do Australia and Indonesia.

"The terms of reference call for the Committee to examine the full range of our current bilateral relations and ways to build a relationship for the future that is positive and mutually beneficial," Mr Jull said.

The Committee will receive written submissions until 25 October 2002, after which it will conduct a series of public hearings. Contributions are welcome from anyone with an interest in the issues raised by the terms of reference.

For media inquiries, contact the Sub-Committee Chairman, the Hon David Jull MP, on 02 6277 2182 or 07 3299 1159.

For all other inquiries, contact the Sub-Committee Secretary, Cliff Lawson, on 02 6277 4306 or visit the committee website at www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jfadt/reports.htm