



THE SENATE

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE

21 December 2009

Senator the Hon John Hogg
President of the Senate
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Inquiry into the security challenges facing Papua New Guinea and the island states of the southwest Pacific—interim report

Pursuant to Senate Standing Order 38(7), I present to you an interim report of the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee on the security challenges facing Papua New Guinea and the island states of the southwest Pacific.

On 24 June 2008, the Senate referred the following matter to the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade for inquiry and report by 30 May 2009:

- a) The major economic and security challenges facing Papua New Guinea and the island states of the southwest Pacific:
 - i) the implications for Australia;
 - ii) how the Australian Government can, in practical and concrete ways, assist these countries to meet the challenges.
- b) The inquiry to include an examination of the following:
 - i) employment opportunities, labour mobility, education and skilling;
 - ii) barriers to trade, foreign investment, economic infrastructure, land ownership and private sector development; and
 - iii) current regional organisations such as the Pacific Islands Forum and the Secretariat of Pacific Community.

On 13 May, the Senate resolved to restructure its committee system and as a result the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade was split into two separate committees—the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee and the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee. Under standing order 25(4), the References Committee assumed responsibility for the inquiry.

In its interim report, tabled on 29 May 2009, the committee informed the Senate that it would present its final report on 21 August 2009. On 18 August, the Senate granted the committee an extension to its reporting date to 29 October and subsequently to 19 November 2009.

During this inquiry, the committee considered a number of important economic and security issues. To allow detailed consideration of both matters and to ensure that they were explored in a comprehensive manner, the committee decided to divide the report into two separate volumes. The first to deal primarily with the economic challenges and the second with security matters. The committee tabled Volume I on 19 November 2009. On 23 November, the Senate passed a motion that the committee was to present Volume II on security challenges on 24 December 2009.

To allow the committee further time to consider the evidence, the committee intends to table Volume II on 25 February 2010.

Senator Russell Trood
Chair, References Committee