

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### Reference to the Committee

1.1 On 26 August 1999, on the motion of Senator Bolkus, the Senate referred the state of the environment of Gulf St Vincent to the Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts References Committee for inquiry and report by the first sitting day in April 2000. (The full terms of reference are set out at the beginning of this report.) The reporting date was subsequently extended to 5 June 2000.

### Conduct of the inquiry

1.2 The Committee advertised the inquiry on 4 September 1999 in *The Weekend Australian*, the *Adelaide Advertiser* and relevant editions of the suburban Messenger Group in Adelaide, with a nominated closing date for submissions of 8 October 1999. The Committee also wrote to a number of organisations, seeking written submissions.

1.3 The Committee received 326 submissions, of which 281 were in the form of a standard letter. All submissions are listed in Appendix 1. Copies of non-confidential submissions are available on request.

1.4 The Committee held public hearings in Adelaide, on 3 February 2000 and Port Adelaide, on 4 February 2000. The Committee also inspected areas around Gulf St Vincent in the Port Adelaide River and Barker Inlet environs.

1.5 Senate Committee procedures provide that where evidence 'adversely reflects' on a person or an organisation (for example, by accusing them of deliberate lies or illegal acts), that person or organisation should have a reasonable right of reply. In a number of cases in this inquiry the Committee pointed out 'adverse reflections' to the affected parties and invited reply. The replies are part of the public evidence of the inquiry (unless the Committee accepted a request for confidentiality) and are noted in Appendix 3.

### Acknowledgements

1.6 The Committee wishes to thank all those who contributed to the inquiry by preparing written submissions, by giving oral evidence, by providing additional information and material where requested or by assisting with arrangements for public hearings and inspections.