

27 March 2002

**SENATE FOREIGN AFFAIRS DEFENCE AND TRADE
REFERENCES COMMITTEE**

**INQUIRY INTO AUSTRALIA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH
PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND OTHER PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES**

Senator John Hogg, the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, has welcomed the Senate's referral of the matter of Australia's relationship with Papua New Guinea and the island states of the South Pacific.

'Our relationship with our Pacific neighbours is a matter of considerable importance for Australia', said Senator Hogg. 'Our close ties with Papua New Guinea, in particular, reflect our special relationship with the region. This inquiry will contribute to a strengthening of our understanding of our Pacific neighbours, and should further enhance Australia's capacity to assist in their development'.

Senator Hogg said that in examining the current state of political and economic relations between regional Pacific states and Australia and New Zealand, matters related to trade, tourism and investment would be prominent considerations.

The Committee will be advertising in the national press for written submissions that should be lodged with the Committee's secretariat by 11 June 2002. Full terms of reference are available on the Committee's website, or from the Secretariat on (02) 6277 3536.

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