



Health committee considers creation of a national centre for disease control

The House of Representatives Health Committee has recommended that the Australian Government assess the need for a national centre for infectious disease control, in a report released in parliament today.

The committee tabled its report, entitled *'Diseases have no borders: Report on the inquiry into health issues across international borders'* after holding a series of public roundtable discussions around Australia with infectious disease experts and other interested stakeholders.

A number of roundtable participants argued that a national centre would prepare Australia to respond to future emerging disease threats by improving national coordination and increasing efficiencies.

Committee Chair, Jill Hall MP, told parliament that as the number of people travelling to and from Australia increased, so too did the risk that infectious disease would be imported into Australia.

"People movement across international borders is on the increase," Ms Hall said. "With this increase, Australia is becoming more vulnerable to infectious disease threats from overseas sources."

The committee made a total of 15 recommendations aimed at helping Australia prepare for future infectious disease threats of global concern, particularly from the Asia-Pacific region.

"During this inquiry, the committee considered a range of infectious disease challenges for Australia, including the need to control the spread of disease between Papua New Guinea and the Torres Strait Islands, and the need to prepare effectively for the next pandemic event," Ms Hall said.

"The Committee has made recommendations which it believes will enhance Australia's ability to meet infectious disease challenges into the future."

The full report can be accessed on the committee's website at www.aph.gov.au/internationalhealth

For media comment: please contact the Office of Jill Hall MP on (02) 4947 9711.

For all other enquiries: please contact the Committee Secretariat by phone on (02) 6277 4145 or visit the Committee's website: www.aph.gov.au/haa.