



*First public hearing*  
**Northern Australia inquiry underway**

The Australian Parliament's Northern Australia Committee will hold the first public hearing for its inquiry into the development of Northern Australia this Friday 21 March 2014 in Parliament House, Canberra.

**The Committee has been tasked to conduct a parallel inquiry process feeding into the Government's White Paper on the Development of Northern Australia.**

The Committee Chair the Hon. Warren Entsch stated: "Evidence taken during the inquiry will assist the Committee's formulation of practical recommendations for the Prime Minister's Northern Australia Taskforce and White Paper. This public hearing will provide foundational evidence from key government departments and agencies on the regulatory frameworks, policies and programs important to the Committee's inquiry."

The Committee will hear from the following agencies:

- Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development
- National Water Commission
- Department of Defence
- The Treasury
- Department of Health
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- The Australian Federal Police
- Department of Migration and Border Protection

The Regional Australia Institute and the Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation, both Canberra-based research co-operatives, and the Minerals Council of Australia will also provide evidence.

"The Committee aims to be well acquainted with the relevant issues and policy context before it undertakes extensive consultations with stakeholders in Northern Australia over coming months", Mr Entsch said. "I look forward to meeting with local people, hearing their views and gathering expert opinion about what must be done, how it should be done and when, so we can realise the vast economic potential of this rich, diverse yet underdeveloped part of Australia."

To date the Committee's inquiry has received over 200 submissions from regional communities and stakeholders from every sector, with many articulating sophisticated development proposals as well as identifying impediments to them. Submissions and other information on the inquiry is available on the Committee website at [www.aph.gov.au/jscna](http://www.aph.gov.au/jscna)

**Public hearing: 9.00am—5.00pm**

**Venue: Committee Room 2R1**

**Audio broadcast on [http://www.aph.gov.au/News\\_and\\_Events/Watch\\_Parliament](http://www.aph.gov.au/News_and_Events/Watch_Parliament)**

**For media comment:** Please contact the Committee Chair the Hon. Warren Entsch MP on (07) 4051 2220

**For background information:** Please contact the committee secretariat:

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