



PARLIAMENT of AUSTRALIA

MEDIA RELEASE

Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories
Inquiry into Australia's Antarctic Territory

Issue date: 14 September 2017

Antarctica inquiry commences hearings

The [Federal Parliamentary Committee](#) examining Australia's Antarctic Territory will commence its public hearing program in Canberra on Thursday.

The Committee will be hearing from the **Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)**, which leads Australia's Antarctic Treaty engagement. The Department's [submission](#) to the inquiry considers matters including Australia's national interests, the Antarctic Treaty System, and how Australia's Antarctic infrastructure supports nuclear non-proliferation efforts. The submission advocates for Australia's ongoing role as a leading Antarctic nation, through a continued presence in the continent supported by scientific and logistical capabilities.

Australia is one of 12 original signatories to the *1959 Antarctic Treaty*, which provides a framework for international governance of the Antarctic region that is fundamental to Australia's strategic interests. The Antarctic Treaty System ensures that the region remains one of peace, dedicated to environmental protection and scientific research.

Committee Chair, [Mr Ben Morton MP](#), said that with 2017 marking the 60th anniversary of Australia's Davis Research Station in Antarctica, the inquiry is a timely opportunity to examine the future of Australia's engagement with Antarctica through appropriate scientific, international, and economic mechanisms. Mr Morton said, "Thursday's public hearing will provide the Committee with an opportunity to learn more about the Antarctic Treaty System and consider the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's leading role in managing Australia's engagement within it."

Further information, including submissions made to the inquiry, and the details of upcoming public hearings may be found on the Committee's [website](#).

Public hearing details: 10:00 am – 11:00 am, Thursday, 14 September 2017, Committee Room 1R2, Parliament House, Canberra

10:00am – 11:00am: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

The hearings will be broadcast live at aph.gov.au/live

Media enquiries:

Mr Ben Morton MP (Tangney, WA), Chair
(08) 9354 9633

For background information:

Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories
(02) 6277 4355, jscncet@aph.gov.au



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