



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade**  
**Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee**

*Chair: Mr Michael Danby MP*  
*Sub-Committee Chair: Mr Nick*  
*Champion MP*

## ***Australia's overseas representation***

The work and structure of Australia's international diplomatic missions will be examined by a new inquiry into Australia's overseas representation.

The inquiry by the federal parliament's Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade committee will review the activities, staffing and location of Australia's diplomatic missions, including the use of technology to conduct diplomatic work.

"The use of new technologies offer a range of possibilities and have the potential to enhance Australia's footprint and diplomatic impact in a cost effective manner," Foreign Affairs sub-committee chair Mr Nick Champion MP said.

The new inquiry will further examine issues raised in two earlier committee inquiries—into Australia's relationship with Africa and a review of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Annual Report 2009–10.

"While the committee recommended in the Africa Report that Australia's diplomatic representation in Africa be increased, it recognised that a broader review of overseas representation was needed.

"In the review of the annual report the committee expressed the view that there was a substantial question in relation to DFAT's future role and the adequacy of the services it provides on behalf of Australia," Mr Champion said.

Mr Champion said the new inquiry will enable the committee to examine in greater depth and to a broader extent the issues which have been raised in earlier inquiries.

The inquiry terms of reference include examining;

- the activities that Australia's diplomatic posts must undertake;
- their geographic location and spread;
- the appropriate level of staffing, including locally engaged staff; and
- the affect of e-diplomacy and information and communications technology on the activities of diplomatic posts.

The sub-committee will receive written submissions until 30 November 2011 and will commence public hearings in early 2012. Contributions are welcome and encouraged from organisations and individuals.

**For media inquiries** contact the Sub-Committee Chair, Mr Nick Champion MP on (08) 8284 2422; Mobile: 0488 556 036.

**For all other inquiries** contact the Inquiry Secretary, John Carter, on 02 6277 2313 or visit the Committee website at