

Dissenting report by Coalition Senators

1.1 As the majority report indicates, Senate committees are able to continue their inquiry activities and complete reports after the prorogation of the Parliament. In this case the committee has cancelled a scheduled hearing in Adelaide and has decided to report without making findings in relation to the bill. This has meant that witnesses interested in the bill, including several existing users of the Woomera Prohibited Area, have not been able to provide evidence to the committee. Further, the conclusion of the inquiry, and the re-referral of the bill in the next Parliament, will likely result in a delay in the passage of this proposed legislation.

1.2 As the submissions from the Department of Defence, the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism and the South Australian government have indicated, the bill will make important changes to the access arrangements to the Woomera Prohibited Area. Potentially, these reforms will have significant benefits for Australia's defence interests and the economy of South Australia.

1.3 Coalition Senators on the committee disagreed with the decision to cancel the hearing and to report without making findings in relation to the bill. Given the importance of a timely outcome to both national security and the South Australian economy, they wished to proceed with the inquiry and to report their findings.

Senator Alan Eggleston
Deputy Chair

Senator David Fawcett

Senator the Hon David Johnston