

Background to the inquiry

Referral and scope

- 1.1 This inquiry into Australia's trade and investment relations with North Africa was referred by the Minister for Trade to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (JSCFADT) on 1 March 2005. The Trade Sub-Committee (hereafter referred to as the committee) conducted the inquiry.
- 1.2 The committee examined trade and investment relations with five countries in the region – Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Morocco.

Inquiry process

- 1.3 The inquiry was advertised in *The Australian* in mid-2005, inviting submissions from the public.
- 1.4 Public hearings were held in Canberra on 1 and 2 August and 4 November 2005.

Figure 1.1 North Africa



Committee visit to North Africa

- 1.5 Following the public hearings, members of the committee visited the five North African countries in November 2005. Their account of that visit is included in this volume as Chapter 4 *Committee's visit report*. The conclusions and recommendations arising from the visit, and from the evidence and submissions, are incorporated in Chapter 5. *Trade with North Africa: barriers and opportunities*.

Structure of the report

- 1.6 The report consists of five chapters. Chapter 2, *The emerging economies of North Africa*, provides an introduction to the five countries. Australia's current relations with the region are discussed in Chapter 3, *Australia's trade and investment with the countries of North Africa*; Chapter 4, *Committee's visit report* records the committee's observations during its visit to the region and Chapter 5, *Trade with North Africa: barriers and opportunities*, examines impediments to greater trade and investment and ways to maximise opportunities in the region.