

MEDIA ALERT

Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee

A report on the effectiveness of Australia's military justice system

Senator Steve Hutchins, Chair of the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, will table the committee's report on its inquiry into the effectiveness of Australia's military justice system on Thursday, 16 June 2005 at approximately 10.30 a.m. The report is a comprehensive document that examines the terms of reference (see attachment).

**A press conference will be held at 12.30 p.m.
in Senate Committee Room 2S2**

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Terms of reference

- (1) The following matters were referred to the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee for inquiry and report by 12 May 2004:
 - (a) the effectiveness of the Australian military justice system in providing impartial, rigorous and fair outcomes, and mechanisms to improve the transparency and public accountability of military justice procedures; and
 - (b) the handling by the Australian Defence Force (ADF) of:
 - (i) inquiries into the reasons for peacetime deaths in the ADF (whether occurring by suicide or accident), including the quality of investigations, the process for their instigation, and implementation of findings,
 - (ii) allegations that ADF personnel, cadets, trainees, civilian employees or former personnel have been mistreated,
 - (iii) inquiries into whether administrative action or disciplinary action should be taken against any member of the ADF, and
 - (iv) allegations of drug abuse by ADF members.
- (2) Without limiting the scope of its inquiry, the committee shall consider the process and handling of the following investigations by the ADF into:
 - (a) the death of Private Jeremy Williams;
 - (b) the reasons for the fatal fire on the HMAS *Westralia*;
 - (c) the suspension of Cadet Sergeant Eleanore Tibble;
 - (d) allegations about misconduct by members of the Special Air Service in East Timor; and
 - (e) the disappearance at sea of Acting Leading Seaman Gurr in 2002.
- (3) The Committee shall also examine the impact of Government initiatives to improve the military justice system, including the Inspector General of the ADF and the proposed office of Director of Military Prosecutions.