



## REPORT ON LEGAL HARMONISATION TABLED

The House of Representatives Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee has today released its report on legal harmonisation in Australia and between Australia and New Zealand.

Committee Chairman, Peter Slipper MP, said that the Committee focused on many different issues during its inquiry. 'The Committee had a keen interest in the relationship between Australia and New Zealand, and also examined a broad range of areas of concern within Australia – everything from real estate regulation to the science industry,' Mr Slipper said.

The report, *Harmonisation of legal systems within Australia and between Australia and New Zealand*, makes a number of recommendations concerning harmonisation in Australia and across the Tasman.

'The Committee believes that the already close relationship between Australia and New Zealand should be closer still', said Mr Slipper. 'In this era of globalisation, it makes sense for Australia and New Zealand to look at moving closer together and further aligning their regulatory frameworks', Mr Slipper said.

Some key recommendations on the Australia-New Zealand relationship include:

- Establishment of a trans-Tasman parliamentary committee to monitor legal harmonisation and examine options including closer association or union;
- Pursuit of a common currency;
- Offering New Zealand Ministers full membership of Australian ministerial councils;
- Work to advance harmonisation of the two banking and telecommunications regulation frameworks.

'It was also clear to the Committee that harmonisation is required on a number of issues within Australia,' said Mr Slipper. 'The Committee has therefore recommended that harmonisation be progressed in a range of areas including power of attorney, consumer protection legislation, the not-for-profit sector, statutes of limitation, evidence law and criminal law,' Mr Slipper said.

Mr Slipper said that the Committee had been pleased to undertake the inquiry. 'The relationship between Australia and New Zealand is unique, and, as the Council of Australian Governments has recognised, legal harmonisation within Australia is a nationally important issue'.

'The Committee has valued the opportunity to make a positive contribution both to the evolution of the Australia-New Zealand relationship and to the streamlining of Australian regulation', Mr Slipper said.

A total of 27 recommendations are made in the report.

### For media interview:

Please contact the Committee Chairman, Peter Slipper MP on (02) 6277 4975 (Canberra) or on (07) 5443 3555 (electorate office).

Or Mr Slipper's media adviser, Richard Bruinsma, on 0417 486 673.

**For background information**, including the full terms of reference, a copy of the report, and copies of submissions, please contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 2358 or visit the inquiry website at: <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/laca/reports.htm>.