

Parliamentary inquiry to look at rights of women and girls in Indo-Pacific

Author : Ashlee Betteridge

Date : March 20, 2014

An [inquiry](#) by the Human Rights Subcommittee of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (JSCFADT) will investigate the challenges facing women and girls in the Indian Ocean and Asia Pacific region.

The [terms of reference](#) of the inquiry, announced Tuesday, focus on the barriers and impediments to enhancing the human rights of women and girls in the region, especially regarding the impact of family and sexual violence, women's leadership and economic opportunities; achievements to date in advancing women and girls' human rights in these key areas; implications for economic and social development in the region of promoting women and girls' human rights; and the effectiveness of Australian programs to support efforts to improve the human rights of women and girls.

The inquiry was requested by Foreign Minister Julie Bishop.

Currently (according to the government itself) around half of Australia's aid budget is spent on initiatives, policies and programs that focus on gender equality, so aid is likely to feature quite significantly.

The Subcommittee is inviting public submissions, with a closing date of Friday 22 May. More information is [available on the committee's website](#).