

## Parliament creates foreign affairs and aid subcommittee

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**Date :** December 18, 2013

The Foreign Affairs Subcommittee under the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (JSCFADT) will be renamed as the Foreign Affairs and Aid Subcommittee for the 44th Parliament.

The change was confirmed to us by the JSCFADT Secretariat. Membership of the subcommittee is still being decided and is likely to be finalised at the beginning of the Autumn sittings.

This is welcome news. Stephen Howes and I recently [published a policy brief](#) on this topic, outlining the history of the idea and the reasons for why a dedicated subcommittee on aid would be a positive step.

While the renaming of an existing committee may seem to some to be a token step, it is actually a workaround to overcome some of the resourcing challenges that had been holding up the creation of a standalone aid subcommittee--an idea which already had bipartisan support but was struggling to get up due to questions of cost.

We will now have to wait to see how the subcommittee functions and whether it takes on the suggestions that Stephen and I made in our brief of reviewing existing evaluative material from the aid program and the Office of Development of Effectiveness.

[As we reported last week](#), 2014 will kick off with a Senate inquiry into the changes to the aid budget and AusAID (though it will be carried out by the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References committee, so not this new subcommittee).

The call for submissions to the inquiry has just been released--public submissions are due by February 7 with a reporting date of March 20. More details are available on the [committee website](#).

