



## PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDS OF EPILEPSY

JILL HALL MP

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### MEDIA RELEASE

## **INQUIRY INTO THE IMPACT OF EPILEPSY IN AUSTRALIA**

The conveners of the Parliamentary Friends of Epilepsy have today announced an inquiry into the impact of Epilepsy in Australia today.

It is important that parliamentarians fully understand the impact that this neurological disorder has on families around the country.

This disorder can touch anyone; it doesn't discriminate on the basis of age, gender or race. As much as 2% of the population is affected with epilepsy and, in the wider Australian community, it is vital that we shed some light on epilepsy and ways public policy can improve the lives of people with Epilepsy.

The Parliamentary Friends of Epilepsy have agreed to hold this inquiry so that Senators and Members of Parliament can develop an understanding of the disorder and develop strategies to work with people and organisations to assist individuals and their families.

Submissions should be sent to:

Jill Hall MP  
Federal Member for Shortland  
PO Box 499  
BELMONT NSW 2280  
Or by email to [Mark.Raper@aph.gov.au](mailto:Mark.Raper@aph.gov.au)

Submissions should be received by 2 October 2009 and should address the terms of reference (attached). The Committee will hold an inquiry in Parliament House Canberra on 30 October 2009.

10 September 2009

Media contacts:

Senator Humphries – Josh Manuatu – 0421 115 365

## **Terms of Reference**

### **Context**

“Epilepsy is the most common serious brain disorder in the World”

“It is doubtful if any medical condition has been so universally neglected, due to a combination of social stigma, low profile and lack of resources” – *World Health Organisation (1997)*.

Australian research indicates that people with Epilepsy, their families and carers are socially excluded and this impacts on their quality of life. The stigma and discrimination associated with Epilepsy is recognised as significant barrier participation in both employment and in the community. The unique episodic nature of the many and varied epilepsies makes identification, management and life with Epilepsy both challenging and complex.

In Australia, there is little data available providing details of the incidence, prevalence and social impact of Epilepsy. This is a barrier to developing effective social policies and providing medical and other services to improve the lives of people with Epilepsy.

### **Terms of Reference**

1. To report to the Parliament on the impact of Epilepsy in Australia, including:
  - a) what is known about the incidence, prevalence, mortality and morbidity of Epilepsy in Australia;
  - b) gaps in our understanding regarding the incidence, prevalence, mortality and morbidity of Epilepsy in Australia;
  - c) the barriers to social and economic participation for People Living with Epilepsy, including education, employment, and transport;
  - d) the adequacy of current models of medical care; and
  - e) practical measures which will better support People Living with Epilepsy.

### **Scope of the Inquiry**

The inquiry will be undertaken in all states of Australia in order to examine reports and information available on the matters listed in these Terms of Reference and to supplement this material by additional inquiry and research where the information is incomplete or outdated.