



AUSTRALIA'S DEFENCE AND IRAQ
25 February 2003

On Friday night, the public has an opportunity to hear from South Australian Senator Alan Ferguson.

Senator Ferguson is chairman of the Federal Parliament's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, the largest parliamentary Committee, comprising membership of all parties and both Houses of Federal Parliament.

Senator Ferguson will be speaking at the Hilton Motel in Port Lincoln at 7.30pm.

"When Iraq was forced to withdraw from Kuwait in 1991, Saddam Hussein signed an agreement with the United Nations to disarm within 15 days, but for the past 12 years Saddam Hussein has failed to cooperate with UN weapons inspectors and has continued his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction," Senator Ferguson said.

"Only Saddam Hussein can make the choice for peace. Full disclosure by Iraq of its chemical, biological and nuclear weapons programs, and immediate and total cooperation by Iraq with the provisions of resolution 1441 of the Security Council, will remove the need for military action," he said.

Information from the United Nations, intelligence sources, Iraqi defectors and the International Atomic Energy Agency has shown that Saddam Hussein has biological and chemical material sufficient to kill millions of people. He has not accounted for 1.5 tons of VX nerve agent, one of the world's most lethal chemicals.

Saddam Hussein's support for terrorism is of great concern due to the possibility of Iraqi weapons falling into the hands of terrorists.

"We share a regional concern in the Asia Pacific to avoid the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction," Senator Ferguson said.