53rd Report

Introduction

Standing order 19 (2) and (3) requires that the Committee determine the amount to be included in the parliamentary appropriation bill for the Department of the Senate.

Proposed Appropriations for 2012-13

The Committee notes that the Senate Department's 2012-13 appropriations have been calculated in accordance with current Commonwealth funding policy. Under this policy, the forward estimates reflect:

- a previously announced efficiency dividend of 1.5 per cent;
- an additional efficiency dividend for the 2012-13 financial year of 2.5 per cent; and
- limited funding for an agreed budget measure – the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights.

The two significant changes to the department's budget are the additional 2.5 per cent efficiency dividend, and partial funding ($0.424m) for the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights.

The Committee acknowledges that funding for the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights represents some additional funding for new functions to be undertaken by the department, although this funding is less than that proposed by the Committee.

The Committee also notes that funding for the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights is the only approved budget measure of the three proposals endorsed by the Committee and submitted to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Finance and Deregulation. The other two proposals were:

- funding for legislative drafting and advice to meet a higher demand for private senators' bills resulting from the parliamentary reform proposals; and
- funding for enhanced information management capacity associated with Government 2.0 and new generation web technology to enable the Senate to maintain an appropriate presence on the Internet.

The Committee notes with concern that there has been no response to its correspondence and no formal communication from government to the Committee as envisaged by the resolutions of the Senate on 2 December 1985 and 30 November 1988 which set out processes to be followed in these circumstances.

The proposed appropriation has been calculated as follows:

Part 1 - Departmental Annual Appropriation

The current year's budget for departmental expenses (as disclosed in the 2011-12 PBS)	**$21.569m**
Effect of forward year and parameter adjustments/1.5% efficiency dividend	+0.157m
Departmental Capital Appropriation at 20%	-0.164m
Additional efficiency dividend (2.5% for 2012-13)	-0.515m
Agreed budget measure: Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights:	+0.424m
Joint Gambling Reform Select Committee (2010-11 funds received in 2011-12)	-0.330m
Total departmental appropriation for 2012-13	**$21.141m**

Part 2 – Accumulated Prior Year Appropriations, Operating Results and Capital Expenditure

Balance of prior year appropriations (estimate as at 30 June 2012)	**$10.424m**

Part 3 - Special Appropriations (senators' remuneration and entitlements)

Made up of the following components (for this and next year):

2011-12:	
Parliamentary Entitlements Act 1990	$ 0.736m
Parliamentary Superannuation Act 2004	$ 1.238m
Remuneration Tribunal Act 1973	$15.488m
Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1901	$ 0.670m
Total Special Appropriations for 2011-12	**$18.132m**
2012-13:	
Parliamentary Entitlements Act 1990	$ 0.736m
Parliamentary Superannuation Act 2004	$ 1.486m
Remuneration Tribunal Act 1973	$18.452m
Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1901	$ 1.152m
Total Special Appropriations for 2012-13	**$21.826m**

The total appropriation to be approved by the Parliament in the appropriation bill for 2012-13 will be $21.141m (compared to $21.569m in 2011-12).

Special appropriations of $21.826m will also be drawn down during the year (compared to an estimate of $18.132m in 2011-12).

Determination

The committee determines that the total appropriation to be approved by the Parliament in the appropriation bill for 2012-13 is $21.141m and reports to the Senate accordingly.

Senator the Hon John Hogg
Chairman

May 2012