PREFACE

On 10 February 2005, the Senate referred to the Committee the examination of additional estimates of proposed expenditure for the financial year 2004-2005. The Committee is responsible for the examination of the Attorney-General's and the Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs portfolios. The additional estimates statements for both portfolios were tabled in the Senate on 10 February 2005. On 10 February, the Senate also referred to the Committee any issues arising from the Advance to the Finance Minister for its consideration as part of this additional estimates process.

The Committee was required to report on its consideration of the additional estimates on or before 15 March 2005.

Estimates hearings

The Committee met in public session from 14 February 2005 to 18 February 2005 for a total of 28 hours 3 minutes.

Recording of proceedings

The Hansard of the proceedings records the examination of estimates and may be accessed through the internet at:

http://www.aph.gov.au/hansard

The Hansard is also available on the Parliamentary database.

An index of the Hansard for each portfolio appears at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

Ministers

The Committee heard evidence from Senator the Hon Chris Ellison, Minister for Justice and Customs who represented the Attorney-General and from Senator the Hon Amanda Vanstone, Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs.

Officers from both departments and associated agencies also appeared. The Committee thanks Ministers and officers for their assistance.

Questions on Notice

The Committee notes that the Standing Orders require the Committee to set dates for the lodgement of any written answers or additional information and for supplementary hearings. The Committee resolved that the deadline for the submission of written answers and additional information by both portfolios would be close of business on Friday, 8 April 2005.

Report

In this report, the Committee draws the attention of the Senate to issues and concerns raised in the three days of hearings. These included:

> The Committee again questioned officers from the Attorney-General's portfolio in respect of the activities of Mr Mamdouh Habib and his treatment when in custody overseas. The Committee also canvassed the allegations made by Mr Habib that he had been tortured while in custody.
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> Statements made by officers in evidence before the Committee can be considered as reflecting adversely upon Mr Habib. The rules of the Senate provide that, where evidence is given to a Committee which may be considered as reflecting adversely on a person, the Committee is required to provide that person with a reasonable opportunity to access and respond to that evidence. The Committee therefore wrote to Mr Habib on 18 February 2005 extending him an opportunity to respond.
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> Officers from the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs were questioned at length concerning the detention of Ms Cornelia Rau.
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> The Committee questioned the Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police, Mr Mick Keelty regarding the murder of Australian Protective Service Officer Adam Dunning in the Solomon Islands on 21 December 2004. The Commissioner also responded to questions concerning the safety of officers serving in the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea.