

Report on the inquiry into the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Green Army Programme) Bill 2014

1.1 On 6 March 2014, the Senate, on the recommendation of the Selection of Bills Committee, referred the provisions of the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Green Army Programme) Bill 2014 (bill) to the Community Affairs Legislation Committee (committee) for inquiry and report by 25 March 2014.¹

1.2 The bill was introduced into the House of Representatives by the Hon. Gregory Hunt MP, Minister for the Environment, on 26 February 2014. The bill has not yet been introduced into the Senate.

1.3 The bill seeks to amend the *Social Security Act 1991* and the *Social Security (Administration) Act 1999* to clarify social security payments for participants receiving the green army allowance paid under the Green Army Programme (programme), a key initiative of the Coalition Government. According to the Explanatory Memorandum, the bill specifies:

- persons receiving a green army allowance under the programme cannot also receive a social security benefit or social security pension;
- participants in the programme will not be considered workers or employees for the purposes of various Commonwealth laws;
- the income testing arrangements that will apply to a person receiving a social security pension if their partner is receiving a green army allowance.²

1.4 Although the bill seeks to amend social security legislation, which is normally a matter for the committee, in this instance the committee has resolved that issues raised by the bill would best be considered by the Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment. These issues include: industrial and workplace safety coverage; scrutiny of income, tax and benefit payments; and consideration of training hours, outcomes and training accreditation. The committee has further resolved that, in order to allow sufficient time for the proper scrutiny of the bill, the reporting date for the inquiry should be extended to 13 May 2014. Accordingly, the committee makes the following recommendations.

Recommendation 1

1.5 The committee recommends that the Senate refer the bill to the Education and Employment Legislation Committee for inquiry and report by 13 May 2014.

1 Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, *Journals of the Senate*, No. 18 - 6 March 2014, pp 576-577.

2 Explanatory Memorandum, p. 2.

Recommendation 2

1.6 The committee recommends that, in conducting any inquiry, the Education and Employment Legislation Committee have the power to consider and use any evidence submitted to the Community Affairs Legislation Committee in relation to the bill.

Senator Sue Boyce

Chair