

Economics Legislation Committee

The committee met on Monday, 2 June 2014 from 9 am to 9.32 pm.

The committee called the department and agencies of the Industry portfolio, including the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO), the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), Chief Scientist and Office of the Chief Scientist, Geoscience Australia (GA), the Anti-Dumping Commission, Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS), and National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environment Management Authority (NOPSEMA).

Among other issues, the following issues were discussed:

- the effect of the Budget on ANSTO's funding levels
- the use, benefits and operation of the Synchrotron, including waste disposal shipped to the United States
- staffing levels and redundancies at the CSIRO, including their impact on research centres and work with universities and industry
- the 35,000 unique visitors to the website of the Office of the Chief Scientist's within 6 months
- the number of recent science graduates and whether there is a surplus
- the role of the Chief Scientist in advising government in leading the government's science research plan
- updates on evidence concerning fracking since GA's last appearance at estimates
- the involvement of GA in the search for Malaysian airlines flight MH370
- graduate and general recruitment by GA
- the current operation of the anti-dumping system and the competitiveness of Australian industry
- the March meeting of the international trade remedy forum
- the aggregate effect of efficiency dividends on the budget of AIMS, including the reduced scope of research and citations
- the work undertaken by AIMS concerning the management of the Great Barrier Reef
- the financial worth of the marine industry and its projected growth by 2025
- the involvement of AIMS in the oil and gas industry and the type of work undertaken, including baseline assessment and risk assessment in WA and NT
- the transition to the new regulatory regime under NOPSEMA, including the previous duplication of state legislation and regulatory functions, and whether the transition has been well received by stakeholders
- how NOPSEMA is managing and ensuring safety and compliance as a regulator; and the adequacy of its resources
- various program cuts and agency amalgamations and their implications for the department

- the automotive funding scheme
- the stocktake/audit of regulations and red-tape reduction within the department and agencies
- the different interest rates applicable to student university loans and apprenticeship loans and the mechanics of the operation of these loans
- the impact of the budget on apprenticeships
- the training of workers in new industries
- the measurement of KPIs of Industry Skills Councils
- what will be funded by the Science for Australia's Future fund.