

Economics Legislation Committee

The committee met on Thursday, 26 February 2015 from 9 am until 11 pm.

The committee called:

- the Department and agencies of the Treasury portfolio, including the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Australian Taxation Office (ATO), and
- the Department and agencies of the Industry and Science portfolio, including the Office of the Chief Scientist, the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS), and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO).

Among other issues, the following matters were discussed:

- the ABS's ageing statistical infrastructure, changes to the 5 year census (which costs about \$440 million) and the different types of censuses (ie short and long form),
- labour force sampling and analysis,
- competitiveness in the banking system,
- changes to foreign investment in real estate,
- tax avoidance issues and the Tax White Paper Taskforce,
- changes in the role of the Chief Scientist and the number of hits and unique visitors to the Chief Scientist's webpage,
- reviews of research infrastructure and institutional infrastructure in science,
- the Chief Scientist's strategy to attract high achieving students to the sciences and maths or science specialists to teach science,
- the health of Great Barrier Reef coral and the impact of dredging on coral reefs,
- the CSIRO's new chief executive's experience and vision for the agency,
- CSIRO staffing numbers, staff attrition and morale,
- coal seam gas fugitive emission study,
- research and development tax incentives,
- the Prime Minister's Prizes for Science,
- the Senate inquiry into the future of the automotive industry, and
- the timeliness of responses to questions on notice.