

Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

The committee met on Tuesday, 26 May 2015 from 9 am until 10.17 pm.

The committee called the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) including the Office of Best Practice Regulation (OBPR) and the Office for Women.

Among other issues, the following matters were discussed:

- the paid parental leave scheme, including the process by which the policy changed,
- the role of the OBPR and the effectiveness of the post-implementation review,
- the process in establishing a prospective inquiry into iron ore,
- free trade agreements with China, Japan and Korea,
- the Code of Conduct for ministerial staff and alleged conflicts of interest in the subsequent employment of former Defence Chief of Staff, Mr Sean Costello,
- the audit report by Air Warfare Destroyer (AWD) Alliance and the leaking of information,
- dialogue with the Japanese Government on the future submarines programs,
- the Departmental Enterprise Agreement, including pay disparities, bargaining policy, funding for the pay rise, arrangements for staff promoted or newly recruited and general staffing issues,
- the unauthorised use of the Commonwealth coat of arms,
- the cost of three white/green papers (on Agriculture, Federation Reform and Northern Australia),
- the Prime Minister's visit to Europe, including costs, staff travel arrangements and outcome,
- the Chief of Staff to the Prime Minister,
- photographic equipment purchased for the Prime Minister's Office,
- cyber threats, including their economic effects, and the cyber security review,
- Australia's application for the membership of the United Nations Human Rights Council,
- flags purchased for non-official events,
- visits by foreign leaders and their costs,
- counter-terrorism arrangements, including the appointment of the Minister assisting the Prime Minister on counter terrorism and the resulting reporting structure,
- the Public Data Project,
- the declaration of gifts received by the Prime Minister,
- the Business Advisory Council, including the frequency and cost of meetings and the role of the Department,
- delays in responding to freedom of information requests,

- the use of official aircraft by the Prime Minister,
- the function and role of the Department in the Parliament House Security Taskforce,
- the role of the Department, and specifically the Office for Women, in the development of the paid parental leave scheme policy, its impact on public sector workers, and the Department's response to the public's reaction to the Budget,
- with regard to domestic violence, the Advisory Panel on Violence Against Women, including Panel membership, strategy priorities and Diversity Scholarship programs, and the national domestic violence awareness campaign, including Commonwealth funding and total national expenditure, and
- the Office for Women's international engagement activities, including their cost and effectiveness.