

## Introduction

### Background

- 1.1 The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Economics (the committee) is responsible for scrutinising the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) and for ensuring its transparency and accountability to the Parliament, the community and the financial sector.
- 1.2 The appearance by the Governor of the RBA at biannual public hearings of the committee is an important element of the RBA's accountability framework. The details of this framework are set out in the *Seventh Statement on the Conduct of Monetary Policy*, agreed between the Treasurer, the Hon Scott Morrison, MP, and the RBA Governor, Dr Philip Lowe. The statement formalises the biannual appearance before the committee and is reproduced at Appendix B. It states:
  - ...the Governor will continue to be available to report twice a year to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Economics, and to other Parliamentary committees as appropriate. The Treasurer expresses support for the continuation of these arrangements, which reflect international best practice and enhance the public's confidence in the independence and integrity of the monetary policy process.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.3 A second procedural mechanism for achieving this accountability is set out in the Standing Orders of the House of Representatives, which provide for the referral of annual reports within a committee's area of portfolio responsibility for any inquiry the committee may wish to make. Hence, the committee may inquire into aspects of the annual reports of the RBA.

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1 Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA), *Seventh Statement on the Conduct of Monetary Policy*, 19 September 2016.

## Scope and conduct of the review

- 1.4 The fourth public hearing of the committee with the RBA during the 45<sup>th</sup> Parliament was held in Sydney on 16 February 2018.
- 1.5 The proceedings of the hearing were webcast over the internet, through the Parliament's website, allowing interested parties to listen to the proceedings as they occurred. The transcript of the hearing is available on the committee's website.<sup>2</sup>
- 1.6 Before the hearing, the committee received a private briefing from Ms Su-Lin Ong, Senior Economist at RBC Capital Markets. This briefing provided valuable background information for the committee and perspectives on issues for discussion at the public hearing. The committee appreciates Ms Ong's cooperation and assistance.
- 1.7 The committee also appreciates the provision of additional briefing material from the Parliamentary Library Research Service.
- 1.8 The hearing was well attended by members of the public and media.
- 1.9 The public hearings with the RBA continue to bring issues of monetary policy into the public arena, and have assisted in providing a public face to parliamentary committees and the RBA. These hearings are also an important means whereby financial markets can be better informed on the current thinking of the RBA.
- 1.10 This report focuses on matters raised at the public hearing, and also draws on issues raised in the RBA's February 2018 *Statement on Monetary Policy*. The *Statement on Monetary Policy* may be viewed through the RBA's website.<sup>3</sup>

## Next public hearing with the Reserve Bank of Australia

- 1.11 The committee will conduct the next public hearing with the RBA on 17 August 2018 in Canberra. More details will be circulated in the weeks leading up to the hearing.

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2 House of Representatives Standing Committee on Economics, *Past Public Hearings and Transcripts*, 16 February 2018, <[https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/House/Economics/RBA2017AnnualReport/Public\\_Hearings](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Economics/RBA2017AnnualReport/Public_Hearings)>, accessed 20 February 2018.

3 Reserve Bank of Australia, *Statement on Monetary Policy*, February 2018, <<https://www.rba.gov.au/publications/smp/2018/feb/>>, accessed 23 February 2018.