

Chapter 1

Overview

1.1 On 8 February 2018 the Senate referred the following documents to the Education and Employment Legislation Committee (the committee) for examination and report:

- particulars of proposed additional expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2018 [Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2017-2018];
- particulars of certain proposed additional expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2018 [Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2017-2018]; and
- Final Budget Outcome 2016-17.¹

Portfolio coverage

1.2 In accordance with a resolution of the Senate on 31 August 2016, as amended on 12 February 2018, the committee is responsible for the examination of the expenditure and outcomes of the following portfolios:

- Education and Training; and
- Jobs and Innovation (Jobs and Small Business).²

1.3 A full list of agencies is available at Appendix 1.

Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements (PAES) 2017-18

1.4 The Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements (PAES) 2017-18 for the Education and Training portfolio and Jobs and Small Business (Part of the Jobs and Innovation Portfolio) were tabled in the Senate on 8 February 2018.³

Education and Training portfolio

1.5 The 2017-18 PAES for the Education and Training portfolio provides information on the revised estimates for the portfolio and highlights the Australian Government's education and training priorities including:

- implementation of the child care package to enhance access by vulnerable and disadvantaged communities to child care;

1 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 83, 8 February 2018, p. 2647.

2 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 2, 31 August 2016, p. 76 and No. 84, 12 February 2018, p. 2668. Please note, as a result of a machinery of government change on 20 December 2017 the Department of Employment has been renamed the Department of Jobs and Small Business. This new department falls under the Jobs and Innovation portfolio. The rest of this report will therefore refer to the Jobs and Small Business as part of the broader Jobs and Innovation portfolio.

3 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 83, 8 February 2018, p. 2647.

- implementation of the In Home Care (IHC) Program to subsidise the cost of child care for families who are geographically located or have complex needs;
- increased funding to implement the Quality Schools reforms package;
- changes to higher education funding, including a freeze on total Commonwealth Grant Scheme funding and revised repayment thresholds under the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP);
- enhanced transparency and accountability of the VET Student Loans program;
- continued administration of the National Competitive Grants Program and the Excellence in Research for Australia evaluation framework.⁴

1.6 The Department of Education and Training has two outcomes as follows:

- Outcome One: improved early learning, schooling, student educational outcomes and transitions from school through access to quality child care, support, parent engagement, quality teaching and learning environments; and
- Outcome Two: promote growth in economic productivity and social wellbeing through access to quality higher education, international education, and international quality research, skills and training.⁵

Jobs and Small Business

1.7 The 2017-18 PAES for Jobs and Small Business provides information on the revised estimates for the portfolio and highlights the Australian Government's portfolio priorities including:

- providing policy advice and delivering programs that further the Australian Government's agenda to create more jobs, increase productivity and foster safe and fair workplaces.⁶

1.8 The Department notes that due to the changes to Administrative Arrangements on 20 December 2017, the Department has gained small business and regulatory policy functions.⁷ Resultant changes to the Department's outcomes and program structure 'will be included in the 2018-19 Portfolio Budget Statements'.⁸

1.9 The Department of Jobs and Small Business currently has the following two outcomes:

4 *Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements 2017-18: Education and Training Portfolio*, pp. 9–11 and p. 53.

5 *Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements 2017-18: Education and Training Portfolio*, p. 4.

6 *Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements 2017-18: Jobs and Small Business (Part of the Jobs and Innovation Portfolio)*, p. 10.

7 *Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements 2017-18: Jobs and Small Business (Part of the Jobs and Innovation Portfolio)*, p. 10.

8 *Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements 2017-18: Jobs and Small Business (Part of the Jobs and Innovation Portfolio)*, p. 10.

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- Outcome One: foster a productive and competitive labour market through employment policies and programs that assist job seekers into work, meet employer needs and increase Australia's workforce participation; and
 - Outcome Two: facilitate jobs growth through policies that promote fair, productive and safe workplaces.⁹

Hearings

1.10 On 14 November 2017 the Senate resolved that Additional Estimates hearings for the committee would occur on 28 February and 1 March 2018.¹⁰ Accordingly the committee considered particulars of additional expenditure as follows:

- Jobs and Small Business—28 February 2018; and
- Education and Training portfolio—1 March 2018.

1.11 The committee heard evidence from the following Ministers:

- Senator the Hon. Michaelia Cash, Minister for Jobs and Innovation;
- Senator the Hon. Zed Seselja, Assistant Minister for Science, Jobs and Innovation; and
- Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham, Minister for Education and Training.

1.12 Evidence was also provided by the following departmental secretaries who were accompanied by officers of the portfolio departments and agencies:

- Ms Kerri Hartland, Secretary, Department of Jobs and Small Business; and
- Dr Michele Bruniges AM, Secretary, Department of Education and Training.

1.13 The committee extends its appreciation to the Ministers and officers of the departments and agencies who assisted the committee in its conduct of the 2017-18 Additional Estimates hearings.

1.14 An index of proceedings is available at Appendix 2.

Questions on notice

1.15 In accordance with Standing Order 26(9)(a), the committee agreed that the date for the return of answers in response to questions placed on notice from the Additional Estimates 2017-18 hearings on 28 February and 1 March would be 12 April 2018.

1.16 Answers to questions on notice are published as they become available on the committee's website: www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Senate_Estimates/ee.

9 *Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements 2017-18: Jobs and Small Business (Part of the Jobs and Innovation Portfolio)*, p. 4.

10 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 13, 8 November 2016, pp. 411–412.

Hansard transcripts

1.17 Committee Hansard transcripts are accessible on the committee's website: www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Senate_Estimates/ee/2017-18_Additional_estimates.

1.18 In this report, references to the most recent Committee Hansard are to the proof transcripts. Page numbers may vary between the transcripts of the Proof Hansard and the Official Hansard.