



Senate Economics Committee  
Supplementary Estimates 2022-23  
Thursday, 16 February 2023  
Daily summary

The committee met from 9.00am until 10.58pm.

The committee called:

- Department of the Treasury portfolio, including the Australian Securities and Investments Commission, Australian Reinsurance Pool Corporation, Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman, National Housing Finance and Investments Corporation; and
- The Department of Industry, Science and Resources, including Corporate, Outcome 1—Program 1.3, National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority, Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation, Outcome 1—Program 1.1, IP Australia, Outcome 1—Program 1.2 and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation.

Topics discussed by the committee included:

Department of the Treasury

Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC)

- ASIC's budget this year around \$450 million
- Inadequate accountability and transparency of ASIC
- News article tabled by Senator McGrath 'Inefficiency and gotcha questions are wasting ASIC's time'
  - o How much oversight is really necessary and productive
- ASIC reviewing short-sellers report on Adani Group
- Amount of active litigation activity
- Aboriginal community benefit fund
  - o Plans managed by Aboriginal communities
  - o November 2022 hearing into liability
- Indigenous financial framework
  - o First nations geographical map of consumer groups
  - o Conducted at remote and regional area
- Investigations into directors
- Shortsellors and emotive language used
- ALS Coal Investigation—Coal quality certificates
- Investigation into complaints against Ms Chester – letter from Treasury Secretary; Treasury review

Australian Reinsurance Pool Corporation (ARPC)

- Two insurance brands have signed on but others are yet to do so
- Mandatory for general insurers to transfer insurance to reinsurers by Dec 2024
- Cyclone claim numbers
- Allianz is only insurer with this large of a territory market
- Impact of risk mitigation and climate resilience on insurance premiums
- Increases in premiums – possible for those with assets at an equal or great value than \$5M to insure for a value up to \$5M

- Feedback on ACCC report

#### Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman (ASBFEO)

- Public information
- Small business loans
- Support ASBFEO provides to those at risk of defaulting
- Meetings with Minister for Small Business & Treasurer as well as regular comms
- Small business who supported passing of laws a couple of years ago
- Minister for Small Business consult with ASBFEO instant-asset-write off
- Gov to commission reviews or inquiries from ASBFEO
- Anticipate increase in callers seeking business advice around compliance
- Assistance function of ASBFEO – what's the number one issue raised (answer: payment (1); contracts (2))
- Franchising sector

#### National Housing Finance and Investments Corporation (NHFIC)

- No questions

#### Department of Industry, Science and Resources

##### Corporate

- Govt intervention in gas prices and continuing gas supply issues
- Gas regulatory regime and consultations on price
- Impact of international market on Australian gas prices
- Ministerial arrangements - differing advice prepared for different Ministers
- Capital works investments projects of Dept – interactions with Dept of Finance Planning and Projects division

##### Outcome 1: Program 1.3 Supporting a strong resources sector

- Gas supply in near and longer term
- Government funding of gas and oil exploration
- Offshore petroleum acreage release – nomination areas and bids for acreage
- East Coast LNG terminals
- Nuclear waste dump facility in Kimba and traditional owners
- Transport of nuclear waste – loss of capsule in Western Australia
- Trade of gas within Australia (between the west and east coast) – licencing conditions onshore
- Measures to increase gas supply both onshore and offshore and processes
- ACCC price intervention guidelines – mandatory code of conduct and pricing provisions
- Lucas Heights – legal storage of waste
  - o Legal costs on external lawyers on the matter
- Main reforms for Australian domestic gas
- ACCC gas inquiry reports – declarations of shortfalls and forecasts
- Heads of agreement – negotiations and market intervention
- Social licences that first nations communities supply regarding mining covenants – engagement and outcomes for communities
  - o Closing the gap processes and grants on critical minerals – compliance with those obligations
  - o Consultation processes with traditional owners
  - o Decommissioning – safe decommissioning and remediation
- Project encouraging proposal examples in relation for new investment decisions for gas – emission reduction targets and other factors involved
- ADGSM trigger in 2023
- Critical minerals development program – grant parameters and award of grants
  - o Investors meeting community standards and financial, social, environmental governance objectives
- East coast reservations scheme

#### National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA)

- Stakeholder briefing 15 December 2022 QON BI-33—Meeting outcomes
- Updated regulatory requirements
- Mandatory Consultation process—Relevant persons
- Assessing and rejecting environmental claims – briefing
- Santos oil spill and environmental impact – threshold for environmental impact
  - o Failure for not reporting offences under the legislation
- Seismic survey proposal
- Focus on decommissioning on the industry's compliance
- Status of the environment plans
- Recent court decision on consultation requirements
- Assessing cultural heritage

#### Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO)

- Kimba facility development—Potential to not proceed with facility
- Development of the CSIRO GenCost22 Report—Interactions between agencies
- Developments overseas with SMR technology companies
- National science statement—Participation of First Nations peoples
- Nuclear capsule retrieval process
- Synchrotron

#### Outcome 1: Program 1.1 Investing in science, technology, and commercialisation

- Boosting Women in STEM program
- National robotics strategy—Advisory committee announcement

#### IP Australia

- Protections for cultural practice. Current stand-alone legislation being looked into for greater protections for first nations people.
- Consultation on cultural knowledge and remuneration received by consultants

#### Outcome 1: Program 1.2 Growing innovation and competitive businesses, industries and regions

- Sovereign capability and supply chains—Move back to DISR
- Critical goods supply chain disruption risks
- Gas price impact of fertiliser on food pricing
- Urea projects in Australia
- Opal paper mill & Parkside timber mill WA closures—Overall impact on supply chains and domestic manufacturing
- National Reconstruction Fund—legislation measures in place restricting funding to Carbon capture and storage projects
  - o NRFC investments in LNG
  - o Business as usual support by NRF—Consultation discussion paper but removed for Bill
  - o Legal requirements for priority areas
- CSIRO COVID-19 Recovery and Resilience report—7 Areas
- Departments contribution to whole of government work on combating inflation pressures
- National battery strategy
- Major project status oversight
- Japanese Ambassador's comments today—Concern by Japanese businesses
- Impact to AUKUS Agreement is NRF not passed

#### Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation

- Water Information research and development alliance—Data and reporting Flood issues
- Murray Darling Basin review
- Publication released by Paul Briens Chief Energy
- 2013 study on carbon consumption by plantlife
- Greenhouse Gas trapped invection concept
- H2Hub at Gladstone—Water resource options for hydrogen production

- GenCost22–23 Draft—Nuclear SNR
- CSIRO Report Climate and related energy policy NET zero effect on Australian economy
- Energy privacy—GenCost22 new build methodology
- Beetaloo basin fracking review—Offsets report NT
- Airbus Avalon Air Show CSIRO involvement
- Enhanced oil recovery projects
- B2Foods CSIRO investment—Wodonga factory closure