



Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee
Additional Estimates 2023-24
Monday, 12 February 2024
Daily summary

The committee met from 9.00am until 11.03pm.

The following agencies appeared before the committee: Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (Corporate Matters, Outcome 1.1, 1.2 and 2.1); Australian Renewable Energy Agency; Clean Energy Finance Corporation; Climate Change Authority; Snowy Hydro Limited; Clean Energy Regulator; Australian Energy Regulator; Offshore Infrastructure Regulator & Offshore Infrastructure Registrar.

The following matters were discussed:

DCCEEW – Corporate

- Processes underlying allocation of grants to the Environmental Defenders Office and review of alleged Environmental Defenders Office misconduct; and
- Concerns relating to the conflicts of interest of EY consultants working on climate policy.

DCCEEW – Outcome 1.1

- Impact of Glasgow accords on government policy formation;
- Reforms to safeguard mechanism regarding reporting requirements of new projects to Minister for Climate Change and Energy;
- Discrepancy between RepuTex's safeguard mechanism emissions modelling and the department's;
- ANAO's report on the governance of the government's climate change commitments;
- Timeline for Powering Australia program;
- Application of Modern Slavery Act to solar panel supply chain;
- Cybersecurity risks of remote-controlled solar panel inverters;
- New vehicle efficiency standards consultation impact analysis – type of advice and analysis that the department provided to DITRDCA;
- Variations concerning international best practice emissions intensities under the Safeguard Mechanism;
- Australia's current fuel stocks supply and reserves, and in accordance with international agreements and stock-holding obligations; and
- Australian Energy Infrastructure Commission's Community Engagement Review report and the Government's response to its recommendations.

DCCEEW – Outcome 1.2

- Amount of fuel in days in the strategic fuel reserves;
- Response to the AEIC report, state and commonwealth responsibilities;
- Australian Renewable Energy Agency;
- Rollout of large-scale battery projects; and
- Grant funding allocated for solar, hydrogen and wind projects.

Clean Energy Finance Corporation

- Financing for the household energy upgrade fund for the electrification of homes and rate at which homes are being electrified; and
- Rewiring the nation project, expenditure and engagement with stakeholders.

Climate Change Authority

- Consideration of energy prices in formulating advice to government regarding emissions reduction;
- Provision of advice regarding the operation of the Safeguard Mechanism; and
- Consulting work by EY for the CCA.

Snowy-Hydro

- Progress of Florence the tunnel borer;
- Percentage of hydrogen that may be used at Kurri Kurri gas plant;
- Capacity and ownership of water in Snowy Hydro reservoirs;
- Snowy and mountain river allocations – the Snow water licence in relation to yearly water release quotas; and
- Modelling of price of energy of Snowy 2.0.

Offshore Infrastructure Registrar and Offshore Infrastructure Regulator

- Outline of the responsibilities of the two new bodies, including environmental considerations;
- Processes relating to granting of licenses in Gippsland and Hunter offshore infrastructure declared areas; and
- Extent of community consultation relating to the issuance of feasibility licences.

Clean Energy Regulator

- Role of Clean Energy Regulator in transition to clean energy sources;
- Value and purpose of contracts with EY to provide auditing services; and
- Enforcement of rooftop solar standards.

Australian Energy Regulator

- Concerns regarding AEMO's involvement in the formulation of the Integrated Systems Plan;
- Operation of emergency backstop mechanism in Queensland; and
- Australian Energy Regulator compliance and enforcement priorities.

DCCEEW 2.1

- Lake Malbena ecotourism proposal;
- Timeline for introduction of EPBC legislation to Parliament;
- Actions taken in relation to species loss in Macquarie Harbour;
- Amount of funding allocated to fieldwork to protect threatened species;
- Progress on recovery plans for Leadbeater's Possum and Swift Parrot;
- Status of Jabiluka mineral lease and rehabilitation efforts;
- Consultation on development of an applications process for sea dumping permits;
- Consultation on and status of conservation advice for the Maugean skate; and
- Progress of projects under Resilient Landscapes Hub.

DCCEEW 2.2

- Timeline for First Nations cultural heritage bill;
- Identification and recording of underwater cultural heritage sites; and
- Status of projects under Resilient Landscapes Hub.

The committee will next meet at 9.00am on Tuesday, 13 February in Committee Room 2S3, for examination of the Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, and the Arts, excluding infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development.