



Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee
Additional Estimates 2023–24
Thursday, 15 February 2024
Daily summary

The Committee met from 9:00am until 10.27pm

The committee called: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australian Trade and Investment Commission and Tourism Australia (Export Finance released from hearing).

Topics discussed by the committee included:

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (non-trade programs)

- Allegations against United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) staff and the Australian Government's response;
- The humanitarian situation in Gaza;
- The use of language when discussing sensitive diplomatic matters;
- Funding allocated to UNRWA in previous and current financial years;
- Australian Government advocacy work regarding the sentencing of Australian citizen, Dr Yang Jun, in Beijing;
- Updates on the work of the First Nations Ambassador, particularly in the Pacific region and in relation to climate change;
- The Australian Government's application of sanctions in relation to the Tatmadaw in Myanmar;
- Updates on the Bayu-Undan CCS project;
- Elections in Pakistan;
- Security, Climate and People Movement agreement with Tuvalu;
- Bangladesh Elections;
- Prime Minister's announcement of an additional \$50 million in funding for Ukraine;
- Independent review into the Afghan Locally Engaged Employee program;
- Australia's climate commitment to the Pacific;
- LGBTQIA+ Plus overseas advocacy;
- Succession of the Dalai Lama;
- Separation of children from their families in Tibet;
- China Rainbow's involvement in Socceroos match in Beijing and links to United Front Group;
- Bringing Russia before the International Criminal Court of Justice in connection with its unlawful invasion of Ukraine;
- Bilateral security treaty with the Solomon Islands;
- Creation of a stable democratic government in Myanmar;
- Preparations the Australian Embassy in Washington is taking for the US elections;
- Reestablishing an Australian embassy in Ukraine;
- Robert Pether's detention in Iraq;
- The Australia Foundation's costings for hiring Australia House (in the UK) for Australia Day functions;
- Humanitarian crisis resulting from the civil war in Yemen;

- DFAT collaboration in relation to strikes on Houthi rebels;
- Julian Assange's extradition to the US; and
- Foreign interference at universities.

Trade Programs

- EU Free trade agreement negotiations;
- Trade statistical pivot tables relating to arms and ammunition;
- Live sheep trade to the Middle East and collaborations with Department of Agriculture;
- Chinese trade impediments on lobster and some meat processors;
- Indonesian trade permit and payment delays for horticulture and live cattle;
- Agriculture visa and MoU (memorandum of understanding) with Vietnam;
- Supply disruptions on trade through the Red Sea from Houthi attacks;
- Terms of reference for the Trade 2040 task force; and
- Threats to the Australian nickel industry from the expansion of the Indonesian nickel industry and potential World Trade Organisation actions.

Australian Trade and Investment Commission

- Austrade job cuts and overseas office closures;
- Internal information leaks to media;
- Export market scheme, development grants, the application process and eligibility criteria;
- Reductions in the Export Market Development Grants budget over coming years;
- Completion of the Simplified Trade System, expected completion date and progress towards completion; and
- Implementation of the Thrive 2030 strategy and resource allocation to Thrive 2030.

Tourism Australia

- Tourist arrival numbers to Australia compared to pre COVID levels;
- Australia's tourist numbers compared to other international markets;
- Domestic cost barriers for travellers; and
- Ruby the Roo advertising campaign.