



Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee  
Additional Estimates 2025–26  
Tuesday, 10 February 2026  
Daily summary

The committee met from 9.01am until 11.01pm.

The committee called the Communications, Sport and the Arts portfolio and discussed the following topics:

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts**

Corporate matters and general questions

- Staffing matters including the status of a former Deputy Secretary;
- Departmental and ministerial travel;
- Social media – budget and spend commitment, analysis and evaluation of campaign, content;
- Election commitment to Smack talk campaign;
- Department expenditure on legal services;
- Legislative agenda for communications and the arts portfolio;
- News Media Bargaining Code – Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) amendments;
- Revive – National Cultural Policy – legislation, review and evaluation;
- Modernisation of National Archive Act;
- Response to Answer to Question on Notice (AQoN) – SQ25-00214 – cost of department plant hire;
- Qantas Club and Virgin Lounge membership statistics; and
- Timing of lodgement of AQoNs.

Program 5.1 – Digital Technologies and Communications Services

- Closing the Gap Outcome 17: Digital Inclusion;
- Anti-siphoning and prominence legislation – outcomes on recommendations;
- Inquiry into online gambling;
- Mobile tower installation and the mobile black spot program;
- Social Media ban – social media ban information kit costs and delivery;
- Digital inclusion program for First Nations;
- Gambling advertising reform;
- Optus 000 outage – Updates on the Bean Review;
- Issues with iPhones being unable to contact triple zero after a faulty update;
- Progress on the development of a Duty of Care Bill;
- Trial of a text messaging service to contact 000;
- Resilience upgrade of 23 mobile base stations;

#### Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA)

- Companies' comments on ACMA's draft media releases – SportsBet; Commonwealth Bank;
- Kyle and Jackie O program – licensing and obligations under the new Commercial Radio Code of Practice;
- Impact of the Australia-US Free Trade Agreement on Australian content obligations;
- Application of anti-siphoning laws to Winter Olympics broadcast;
- Investigations into licensed wagering providers for breaches of self-exclusion rules;
- Alcohol advertising during sports broadcasts;
- Spectrum licenses for Telstra, Optus and TPG Telecom;
- Review into the Optus outage of 18 September 2025; and
- SMS Sender ID register.

#### Australian Broadcasting Corporation

- Acquisition of the Australian documentary 'Silenced';
- Behind The News program for children;
- Improper use of the character Bluey;
- Impact of the National Archives of Australia's issuing of a disposal freeze on records related to antisemitism and social cohesion;
- Recent ABC Broadcast including a former Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Officer;
- Events surrounding Adelaide Writers week;
- Funding for the production of programs on the ABC;
- Portrayal of First Nations perspectives on ABC programs;
- Potentially offensive content on ABC programs;
- References to religious extremism following the Bondi Terror Attack;
- Promotion of Australian artists, including through Triple J; and
- ABC Partnership with ACON.

#### Special Broadcasting Service (SBS)

- SBS broadcasting of Eurovision;
- Use of the term "Occupied Palestinian Territories";
- Expenditure on official SBS functions; and
- Recruitment of a new managing director for the SBS.

#### Office of the eSafety Commissioner

- Terminology surrounding the social media ban;
- The number of accounts deactivated as a result of the U16 Social Media Ban, and how this number was calculated;
- eSafety Commissioner's correspondence with the United States Congress;
- Age assurance technology trials;
- Investigations into xAI and the Grok service;
- Internet traffic before and after the start of the U16 Social Media Ban;
- eSafety Commissioner's international travel; and
- External legal costs.

#### Creative Australia

- Creative Australia response to the recommendations of the report from the Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism;
- Grants given to artists; and
- Ongoing operations of Music Australia.

## Screen Australia

- Production of the documentary 'Silenced'.

Outcome 6: Participation in, and access to, Australia's arts and culture through developing and supporting cultural expression - Program 6.1 – Arts and Cultural Development, Office for the Arts, Closing the Gap Outcome 16: First Nations Languages

- Funding for the Commonwealth Indigenous Languages and Arts Program.

*The Committee made the decision to question both Outcome 7 of DITRDCSA and the Australian Sports Commission at the same time for timing purposes*

Outcome 7: Contribute to healthy, active communities and a sustainable sport system through policy development, coordination and targeted support - Program 7.1: Sport and Physical Activity Australian Sports Commission (Australian Institute of Sport)

- Funding to National Sporting Organisation's;
- Preparations for the 2032 Olympics in Brisbane; and
- Funding cutoffs for sport grants for individual athletes on 30 June 2026.

The committee released the Australian Film, Television and Radio School, Australia Post, Museum of Australian Democracy, NBN Co Limited, National Gallery of Australia, National Archives of Australia and the National Museum of Australia.

This concludes the committee's examination of the 2025-26 Additional Estimates.

Please contact the secretariat on (02) 6277 3526 or [ec.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:ec.sen@aph.gov.au) if you have any questions.