



Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee
Additional Estimates 2025-26
Thursday, 12 February 2026
Daily summary

The committee met from 9.01am until 8.12pm in Committee Room 2S1.

The committee called the Health, Disability and Ageing and Social Services portfolios, discussing the following topics:

Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (DoHDA) – Outcome 2: Individual Health Benefits

- Current bulk billing rates, including the expansion of the bulk billing initiative;
- Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme access to biologics for paediatric patients suffering from Crohn’s Disease;
- Breakdown of average out-of-pocket costs for specialist services/attendance, including non-referrals and diagnostics;
- Classification of Intravitreal/Intraocular injections, including associated costs for patients;
- Health Technology Assessment Policy and Methods Review; and
- Pompe disease.

Professional Services Review

- The Professional Services Review committee process.

Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (DoHDA) – Outcome 4: Disability and Carers, National Disability Insurance Agency and NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

- Fraud and integrity leakage within the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS);
- Cases of unlawful behaviour in the NDIS and cost of fraud investigations;
- Update on the roll out of Thriving Kids, including process for eligibility reassessments;
- The National Health Reform Agreement;
- Tools the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission use to prevent misconduct and ensure safety;
- Banning orders on key personnel, organisations, and support workers in response to bad actors in the market;
- Number of people receiving supports on the NDIS; and
- Update on the new support needs assessment tool, ‘I-CAN’.

Department of Social Services (DSS) – Whole of Portfolio/Corporate Matters

- Advertisement of the Stop it at the Start Campaign and associated funding;
- Escalation of Employee Assistance Program referrals in the department;
- DSS’ performance targets and effect of the Capability Review on helping manage financial constraints;
- Grants process; and

- Separation of redundancy expenses and its itemised breakdown in the Budget.

DSS – Outcome 1: Social Security

- Findings by the Commonwealth Ombudsman’s Report outlining non-compliance with social security law pertaining to child support;
- Recommendations outlined in the Commonwealth Ombudsman’s report, *‘Weaponising Child Support: when the system fails families’*;
- Australian National Audit Office report relating to the administration of the Aged Pension, and findings related to service delivery;
- Increase of various income support payment levels compared to pre-pandemic levels despite claims of a strong labour market;
- Delivery of the new Inclusive Employment Australia Program;
- Youth Housing Penalty, including the work of the department looking at the disparity between Youth Allowance and JobSeeker payments;
- Adequacy of Commonwealth Rent Assistance;
- Status of the Family Law Inquiry and DSS’ review of the Child Support Scheme;
- Number of families receiving the Family Tax Benefit payment;
- Aged recipients’ access to the Work Bonus Scheme; and
- Military invalidity payments.

DSS – Outcome 2: Families and Communities

- Implementation of the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children;
- Difference between consultation mechanisms compared with the National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People;
- Synthesising of different policies and programs between the DSS and other external and internal portfolio agencies;
- Healthy Mate Program;
- Innovative perpetrator intervention to stop the cycle of violence; and
- Our Ways - Strong Ways - Our Voices: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander plan to end family, domestic and sexual violence.

Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS)

- Clarity on prior reporting concerning challenging misconceptions around sexual offending; and
- Corporate data relating to AIFS’ operation; and
- AIFS’ Data linkage functions with the e-Safety Commissioner.

Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission

- Ongoing work of the commission, its oversight functions, powers, and authority to request and compel data from agencies;
- Work of the commission, e-Safety Commissioner and Australian Federal Police in addressing cases of technology-assisted abuse, including AI-facilitated rape and torturing targeting women;
- Implementation of an ongoing taskforce for children and young people experiencing family violence; and
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan, and general coordination with the different actions plans.

National Commission for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People

- Role and broader work of the Commission, and the difference between its state counterparts.

The committee agreed to release the Australian Digital Health Agency.

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

Please don't hesitate to contact the secretariat on 02 6277 3515 or community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au if you require any further information.