



Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee  
Budget Estimates 2020-21  
Tuesday, 20 October 2020  
Daily summary

Here is the summary of today's proceedings in the Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee estimates hearing.

The committee met from 9.00am to 10.08pm.

The committee called the Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio:

- National COVID-19 Commission Advisory Board; and
- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Topics discussed by the committee included:

National COVID-19 Commission Advisory Board

- budget allocation and staffing;
- transition from *National COVID-19 Coordination Commission* to the *National COVID-19 Commission Advisory Board*;
- meetings with the Prime Minister and briefings to the National Security Committee of Cabinet and access to Cabinet deliberations;
- briefings regarding JobSeeker and JobKeeper programs prior to the 2020–21 Budget;
- impact of border closures for businesses and job losses;
- operation of various COVID Task Forces under the Board's oversight; and
- COVID-tracing.

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

- briefings to the Prime Minister regarding the following:
  - ANAO's *Purchase of the 'Leppington Triangle' Land for the Future Development of Western Sydney Airport* report and subsequent AFP investigation;
  - question time;
  - conduct of Daryl Maguire and subsequent ICAC inquiry;
  - US election; and
  - aged care;
- status of legislation establishing a National Integrity Commission;
- allegations of branch stacking;
- Ministerial Standards and ministerial misconduct;
- Cabinet Handbook;
- QAnon movement;
- Public Interest Immunity claims and the use of 'cabinet in confidence';
- Prime Minister's Office involvement relating to the findings of the ANAO's *Award of Funding under the Community Sport Infrastructure Program* report;
- letter from the Auditor-General to the Prime Minister regarding funding for the ANAO;
- Budget 2020–21:
  - gender analysis and 'credible women' movement; and
  - university funding;

- COVID-19 pandemic:
  - arrangements to facilitate the return of Australians stranded overseas;
  - vaccine agreements and related international aid; and
  - World Health Organisation—membership, funding, weapons inspectors, investigation into the origin of COVID-19;
- Mr Tony Abbott's appointment as an official UK trade adviser;
- status of Australia's Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) Bill 2020 and Australia's Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2020;
- processing of questions on notice lodged with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and clearance by the Prime Minister's Office;
- meetings of the National Cabinet;
- gross net debt; and
- staffing.

The committee will next meet at 9.00am on Wednesday, 21 October 2020 in Senate Committee Room 2S1, to examine the Finance portfolio.