



Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee
Budget Estimates 2020-21
Thursday, 29 October 2020
Daily summary

Here is the summary of today's proceedings in the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee estimates hearing.

The committee met from 9.00am until 11.00pm.

The committee called (topics discussed included):

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

- former NSW MP, Mr Daryl Maguire's travel to Melanesia and Shenzhen;
- diplomatic appointments and vacancies;
- appointment of Mr Alex Trueman as a 'thought partner' to then Ambassador Mr Joe Hockey;
- Mr Tony Abbott's travel to UK and appointment to UK Board of Trade;
- transfer of fund from the Vatican to Australia in connection with Cardinal Pell court case;
- Paris Agreement—Australia's commitment and Mr Biden's carbon tariff policy;
- security contracts for the Australian embassies in Kabul and Jakarta—procurement process;
- China's impression/portrayal of Australia;
- Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy;
- DFAT expenditure on global climate change assistance;
- Australia's commitment to UN Joint Response Plan for the Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis;
- representations to Indonesian government regarding human rights in West Papua;
- official development assistance, including budget funding, detailed budget summary, performance indicators, funding to Indonesia, evaluation, published information available and level of transparency;
- staff returning from posts at the start of the pandemic;
- World Coalition for the abolition of the death penalty;
- Papua New Guinea, including representations on opposition to the death penalty, assistance for policing capacity, COVID testing rate, and AUSMAT (Australian Medical Assistance Teams) deployment;
- Iran, including breaches under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, and representations on human rights violations;
- abolition of Innovation Exchange;
- Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development Program;
- Pacific Labour Mobility—review by Renee Leon of Pacific Labour Facility, and review of accommodation arrangements;
- Coral Sea cable project;
- human rights issues in the Philippines;
- human rights issues in Cambodia;
- Australian funding toward COVAX Facility;
- Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between Australia and India;
- Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific;
- Pacific Fusion Centre update;
- Maldives economy;
- Bali Process on People Smuggling;
- South Sudan update on flood and humanitarian crisis;

- support and welfare of workers in the Pacific Labour Scheme;
- Azerbaijan-Armenia conflict; and
- Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

DFAT (Trade Programs)

- Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership negotiations;
- cotton and coal exports to China;
- protection of geographical indications in Australia-EU Free Trade Agreement;
- priority market identification;
- assistance to exporters for trade diversification;
- economic impact by Korea and Japan announcement about zero emissions by 2050;
- Varghese report An India Economic Strategy to 2035—implementation of recommendations;
- UK Government Internal Markets Bill; and
- impact of COVID-19 on international student sector.

Australian Trade and Investment Commission

- National Brand Advisory Council—selection process for board members;
- changes to the Export Market Development Grant scheme;
- government response to tourism industry decline as a result of COVID-19;
- COVID-19 Relief and Recovery Fund, including zoos and aquariums sector grant funding;
- bushfire recovery grants program expenditure; and
- appointment process for new Chief Executive Officer.

Tourism Australia

- programs to assist travel agency sector;
- split of funding between domestic and international sectors; and
- COVID impact on the Tourism Bushfire Recovery International Media Hosting Program.

Export Finance Australia was released without examination.

The committee completed examination of the Foreign Affairs and Trade Portfolio.