



Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
Budget Estimates 2021-22
Thursday, 27 May 2021
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 6.48pm.

The committee called the Finance portfolio:

- Department of Finance;
- Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority; and
- Australian Electoral Commission.

Topics discussed by the committee included:

Department of Finance

- contracts;
- grants;
- bonuses paid to NBN staff;
- deregulation;
- Government campaigns and advertising;
- budget measures for Western Australia, including funding for preschools and mental health;
- budget measures for mental health;
- diversity and inclusion strategy at the Department of Finance;
- Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme;
- matters relating to the alleged assault in the Ministerial Wing in 2019;
- 1800 APH SPT;
- parliamentary network outages and DPS;
- Gaetjens investigation;
- engagement of legal assistance by ministerial staff;
- former media advisor of Senator Cash and provision of legal assistance;
- investigations into the actions of ministerial staff; and
- use of Commonwealth resources for commercial activity.

Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority

- costs and timing of the Parliamentary Expenses Management System (PEMS) redevelopment;
- outstanding debts to the Commonwealth by previous parliamentarians and engagement of debt collectors;
- assurance review on National Party meeting at Nagambie in 2019; and
- provision of manifests from Department of Defence.

Australian Electoral Commission

- funding arrangements for re-election campaigns;
- inquiries into potential breaches in the use of social media by parliamentarians;
- preparatory work for the next Federal election;
- potential impact of COVID on voting, associated contingency plans and vaccination of polling staff;
- leasing of surge accommodation and building election capacity;
- pre-poll voting patterns;
- AEC's software development;
- pre-poll centre security and secure handling; and
- temporary personnel contract costs and developing internal capability.

The committee will next meet at 9.00am on Friday 28 May 2021 in Senate Committee Room 2S1, for cross-portfolio Indigenous Matters.