



Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee  
Budget Estimates 2025-26  
Thursday, 27 March 2025  
Daily summary

The committee met from 9.02am until 11.01pm.

The committee called the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS), Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) portfolio and the Department of Finance portfolio, discussing the following topics:

Department of Parliamentary Services and the Parliamentary Service Commissioner

- Furniture constructed for a former Deputy Secretary, spending on sit/stand desks for Parliamentarians;
- Legal proceedings against the Commonwealth in relation to statements made by a former employee of the Parliamentary Library;
- DPS staffing levels;
- Relocation of DPS staff to West Block; and
- Circumstances around the departure of the former Secretary.

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

- Prime Ministerial communication with Prime Minister Netanyahu, and Australia-Israel relations;
- Woodside Energy's Northwest Shelf Project;
- Dural caravan incident, timing of the briefing of the Prime Minister by the Australian Federal Police;
- Cabinet handbook, declaration of conflicts of interest by cabinet members under the former code of conduct, including declaration of shares;
- Government policy settings regarding Indigenous Voice, Treaty, Truth;
- Funding for Australian Government Consulting, ongoing resourcing;
- Statements of support for Ukraine;
- PM&C tweet about government being in caretaker mode;
- Briefing of Papua New Guinea government on Chinese warships in Australian waters;
- Concerns regarding integrity in the CFMEU;
- Meetings between the Prime Minister and members of the live sheep export industry;
- Communication between PM&C and the Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor General;
- Communication between the Prime Minister and President Trump;
- Tariffs on steel and aluminium by the U.S administration; and
- Approaches and negotiations on potential exemptions on tariffs.

#### Department of Finance (Outcome 3)

- Providing legal advice to parliamentarians on the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017* (PBR Act);
- Government's staffing committee membership; and
- Provision of legal advice on the operation of the PBR Act.

#### Australian Electoral Commission

- Resourcing for the Western Australia state election;
- Prevalence of misleading and deceptive conduct, particularly targeted towards indigenous voters;
- Conditions on election fundraising;
- Trend of increasing number of independent candidates and registered entities;
- Collaboration with social media influencers; and
- Contingency measures for pre-polling in condensed elections.

#### Office for Women and the Workplace Gender Equality Agency

- Process for gender responsive budgeting in the budget papers; and
- New setting targets legislation for the gender wage gap.

#### Australian Public Service Commission

- Budget allocation for Australian Government Consulting.

#### Department of Finance (Outcomes 1 & 2)

- Examination of Budget Paper No. 1, including gross debt and debt as a share of Gross Domestic Product;
- Future resourcing for the Australian Public Service (APS) and Australian Government Report on the Audit of Employment;
- Government use of external consultancies;
- Decisions taken but not yet announced (DTBNYA);
- Preparation and timing of the Pre-election Economic and Financial Outlook (PEFO);
- Allocation of funding to the Clean Energy Finance Corporation;
- APS workforce composition under previous coalition governments; and
- Processes for Commonwealth cover claims.

#### ASC Pty Ltd (appeared remotely from the United Kingdom)

- Life-of-type-extension for Collins Class Submarines and specifically HMAS Farncomb; and
- Recruitment process for new CEO and transition period.

The committee released the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority and Australian Naval Infrastructure from the hearing.

As the Parliament has now prorogued, this concludes the committee's examination of the 2025-26 Budget Estimates.

Please contact the secretariat on (02) 6277 5780 or [fpa.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:fpa.sen@aph.gov.au) if you have any questions.