



Senate Rural & Regional Affairs & Transport Legislation Committee
Budget Estimates 2025-26
Thursday, 27 March 2025
Daily summary

The committee met from 9:00am until 8:45pm.

The committee called the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (DITRDCA) portfolio, and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) portfolio, discussing the following topics:

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

Corporate Matters

- Adjustments to agency appropriations in Budget 2025-26; and
- Involvement of unions on worksites for government projects.

Outcome 1

- Funding for road infrastructure projects;
- Planning for upgrades to the Coorparoo Cavendish Road Level Crossing; and
- Reforms to Sydney Airport slot management.

Outcome 2

- Regional Australia level crossing safety program fund;
- New Vehicle Efficiency Standard (NVES);
- Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme;
- PsiQuantum – Brisbane airport;
- Aircraft noise mitigation at Western Sydney Airport;
- Government Memorandum of Understanding for Melbourne Airport;
- Melbourne airport rail link;
- Road crashes and safety;
- Funding for the Australian Transport Safety Bureau;
- Security breach at Avalon Airport;
- Voluntary administration loan for Rex Airlines;
- Departmental resources and consultancies; and
- Maritime Strategic Fleet.

Outcome 3

- Funding agreements under the Growing Regions Program;
- Applications for the Stronger Communities Programme;
- Projects completed under the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program;
- DITRDCA's responsibilities toward the Housing Support Program; and
- KPIs and staffing for the Office of Northern Australia.

Infrastructure Australia

- Business case for the Suburban Rail Loop;
- Business case for the High Productivity Vehicle Network;
- Update on a proposed Melbourne Airport rail;
- Bruce Highway upgrades; and
- Queensland Inland Road Network upgrade.

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Corporate Matters

- Update on departmental resources and staffing;
- Drought assistance in South Australia;
- National partnership payments; and
- Budget paper 3.

Outcome 1:

- Phase out of live sheep exports by sea;
- Departmental advertising expenditure;
- Drought assistance funding;
- Timing of finalisation of grants for Meat & Livestock Australia and other agencies;
- Drafting of amendments to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act;
- Administration of forestry grants through the Support Plantation Establishment program;
- Funding for cultural activities within the Department; Budget funding for agricultural events, including Beef Week;
- Sunsetting of the Regional Investment Corporation;
- Feeding Australia: National food security strategy;
- Agriculture and Land Sectoral Plan (Emissions reduction);
- Funding for the Carbon Farming Outreach Program;
- Preparing for and responding to United States agricultural tariffs;
- European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) impacts on Australian agriculture', including AgTrace pilot study;
- 'Saving Australia's Bushland' budget measure';
- Drought conditions affecting the winegrape industry in South Australia;
- Winegrape industry, including response to RRAT References Committee inquiry;
- Roadmap for Australia's Economic Engagement with India;
- Agricultural Commodities Report March quarter 2025; and
- Wood Volumes Analysis March 2025.

Outcome 2

- Supporting Communities Manage Pest Animals and Weeds Program;
- Buffel grass classification as weed of national significance;
- Findings of the National Carp Control Plan;
- Red fire ants;
- Regulation of illegal fishing activities; and
- Avian flu.

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 3511 or rrat.sen@aph.gov.au if you have any questions.