

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 On 15 June 2017, the Senate referred the matter of the operations of existing and proposed toll roads in Australia to the Senate Economics References Committee for inquiry and report by 10 August 2017.

1.2 The terms of reference for the inquiry were:

Operations of existing and proposed toll roads in Australia, including:

- a financial arrangements of existing and proposed private toll roads, and transparency, accountability and equity aspects of these arrangements;
- b interaction of commercial considerations of private toll road operators with federal and state transport and infrastructure policy; and
- c any other related matters.¹

1.3 On 9 August 2017 the Senate agreed to an extension of the reporting date to 12 September 2017.² On 12 September it agreed to a further extension to 14 September 2017.³

Conduct of the inquiry

1.4 In accordance with its usual processes, the committee advertised the inquiry on its website, and wrote to relevant organisations to invite submissions. Thirty-seven submissions, including one confidential submission, were received. A list of submissions to the inquiry is at Appendix 1.

1.5 The committee conducted public hearings in Melbourne on 3 August 2017 and in Canberra on 17 August 2017. The names of witnesses who appeared at the hearings are at Appendix 2.

Structure of this report

1.6 This report comprises 6 chapters, including this introductory chapter:

- Chapter 2 presents background information on toll roads in Australia and in other countries.
- Chapter 3 examines the financial arrangements for existing toll roads and projects that are under development, and how those arrangements are arrived at.
- Chapter 4 focuses on equity aspects of toll arrangements, including
 - regional equity considerations for those areas serviced by toll roads, and

1 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 44, 15 June 2017, p. 1436.

2 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 50, 9 August 2017, p. 1634.

3 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 61, 12 September 2017, p. 1958.

- systems of enforcing toll payments and related administration charges.
- Chapter 5 examines the interaction of commercial considerations of the operations of private toll roads with federal and state transport and infrastructure policy.
- Chapter 6 summarises the committee's views and makes recommendations.