

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 On 9 February 2012, the Senate referred the following documents to the Community Affairs Legislation Committee (the committee) for examination and report:

- Particulars of proposed additional expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2012 [Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2011-12];
- Particulars of certain proposed additional expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2012 [Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2011-12];
- Final Budget outcome for 2010-2011; and
- Issues from the advances under the annual Appropriation Acts for 2010-2011.¹

1.2 The committee is responsible for the examination of the Health and Ageing portfolio; the Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs portfolio; and the Human Services portfolio.

1.3 The committee was required to report to the Senate on its consideration of the 2011-2012 additional estimates by 29 March 2012.

1.4 The committee considered the Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements for 2011-2012 for both portfolios at hearings on the 15, 16, and 17 February 2012. The Hearing were conducted in accordance with the agreed agenda as follows:

- Wednesday 15 February 2012 – Health and Ageing Portfolio
- Thursday 16 February 2012 – Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs portfolio; Human Services portfolio
- Friday 17 February 2012 – Cross Portfolio – Indigenous Matters
- Thursday 22 March 2012 - Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs portfolio

1.5 The committee heard evidence from Senator the Hon. Jan McLucas, Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Carers (representing the Minister for Health and Ageing; and the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs); Senator the Hon. David Feeney, Parliamentary Secretary for Defence (representing the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs); and Senator the Hon. Kate Lundy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (representing the Minister for the Department of Human Services).

1 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 75, 9 February 2012, p. 2090.

1.6 Evidence was also provided by Ms Jane Halton, Secretary of the Department of Health and Ageing; Mr Finn Pratt, Secretary of the Department of Families, Housing Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; Ms Kathryn Campbell, Secretary of the Department of Human Services; and officers representing the departments and agencies covered by the estimates before the committee.

1.7 The committee thanks the ministers, departmental secretaries and officers for their assistance and cooperation during the hearings.

Changes to departmental structures

1.8 The committee notes that since the 2011-12 Budget the following agencies have been added to the departmental structure of the Department of Health and Ageing:

- The National Health Performance Authority²
- The Independent Hospital Pricing Authority³

1.9 The committee notes that since the 2011-12 Budget the following agencies have been added to the departmental structure of the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs:

- Aboriginal Land Commissioner, Northern Territory
- Australian Institute of Family Studies
- Office of the Coordinator General for Remote Indigenous Communities
- Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations
- Social Security Appeals Tribunal⁴

1.10 Due to the Administrative Arrangement Orders changes, the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs is no longer responsible for the following:

- Volunteer Management
- Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment
- Repatriation of Indigenous Remains⁵

2 *National Health Reform Amendment (National Health Performance Authority) Act 2011*

3 *National Health Reform Amendment (Independent Hospital Pricing Authority) Act 2011*

4 Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements 2011-12, *Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs Portfolio: Explanations of Additional Estimates 2011-12*, p.4.

5 Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, *Annual Report 2010-11*, pp. 24-27.

1.11 The committee also notes that as a result of the *Human Services Legislation Act 2011*, the Department of Human Services is responsible for all programs formerly provided by Centrelink and Medicare Australia.⁶

Questions on Notice

1.12 In accordance with Standing Order 26, the committee is required to set a date for the lodgement of written answers and additional information. The committee requested that written answers and additional information be submitted by Thursday 29 March 2012. For the additional hearing held on 22 March 2012 for the Torres Strait Regional Authority the committee requested that written answers and additional information be submitted by Friday 20 April 2012.

Additional information

1.13 Answers to questions taken on notice at the committee's additional estimates hearings will be tabled in the Senate in separate volumes entitled 'Additional information relating to the examination of additional estimates 2011-2012, February 2011, Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee.' Documents not suitable for inclusion in the additional information volumes will be available on request from the committee secretariat.

1.14 Answers to questions on notice received from the departments will also be posted on the committee's website at a later date.

Note on references

1.15 References to the Hansard transcript are to the proof Hansard; page numbers may vary between the proof and the official Hansard transcript.

6 Department of Human Services (DHS), *Annual Report 2010-11*, p. 6.

