

The Senate

Community Affairs
Legislation Committee

Budget estimates 2013–14

June 2013

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Membership of the Committee

Members

Senator Claire Moore, Chair	ALP, Queensland
Senator Rachel Siewert, Deputy Chair	AG, Western Australia
Senator Carol Brown	ALP, Tasmania
Senator Mark Furner	ALP, Queensland
Senator Bridget McKenzie	NP, Victoria
Senator Dean Smith	LP, Western Australia

Substitute Members

Senator Catryna Bilyk to substitute for Senator Carol Brown for 6 June 2013	ALP, Tasmania
Senator the Hon Ursula Stephens to substitute for Senator Carol Brown for 7 June 2013	ALP, Queensland

Senators in attendance

Senator Claire Moore (Chair), Senator Rachel Siewert (Deputy Chair), Senator the Hon Eric Abetz, Senator Catryna Bilyk, Senator Carol Brown, Senator Michaelia Cash, Senator Trish Crossin, Senator Richard Di Natale, Senator Sean Edwards, Senator David Fawcett, Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, Senator Mitch Fifield, Senator Mark Furner, Senator the Hon Bill Heffernan, Senator Gary Humphries, Senator Sue Lines, Senator Scott Ludlam, Senator John Madigan, Senator Bridget McKenzie, Senator Marise Payne, Senator Louise Pratt, Senator Lee Rhiannon, Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion, Senator Dean Smith, Senator the Hon Ursula Stephens, Senator Penny Wright, Senator Nick Xenophon

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 On 14 May 2013 the Senate referred the following documents to the committee for examination and report in relation to its portfolios:

- Particulars of proposed expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2014 [Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2013-2014].
- Particulars of certain proposed expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2014 [Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2013-2014]; and
- Particulars of proposed expenditure in relation to the parliamentary departments in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2014.¹

1.2 The committee is responsible for the examination of the following portfolios:

- Health and Ageing;
- Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; and
- Human Services.

1.3 The committee was required to report to the Senate on its consideration of 2013-2014 budget estimates on Tuesday 25 June 2013.²

Details of hearings

1.4 The committee considered the Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS) 2013-2014 for the Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs portfolio, the Human Services portfolio, and the Health and Ageing portfolio, at hearings from 3 June 2013 to 7 June 2013 (inclusive). The hearings were conducted in accordance with the agreed agenda outlined as follows:

- Monday 3 June 2013 – Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs portfolio
- Tuesday 4 June – Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs portfolio and Human Services portfolio
- Wednesday 5 and Thursday 6 June 2013 – Health and Ageing portfolio
- Friday 7 June 2013 – Cross Portfolio – Indigenous Matters

1.5 The committee heard evidence from the following Senators:

- Senator the Hon Jan McLucas, Minister for Human Services (and representing the Minister for Families, Community Services and

1 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 144, 14 May 2013, p. 3915.

2 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 121, 1 November 2012, p. 3239.

Indigenous Affairs, the Minister for Housing and Homelessness, the Minister for Health, and the Minister for Mental Health and Ageing).

- Senator the Hon Matt Thistlethwaite, Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and for Pacific Island Affairs (representing the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and all relevant Ministers for the Cross Portfolio – Indigenous Matters Hearing).

1.6 Evidence was also provided by the following:

- 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;
- Ms Jane Halton, Secretary of the Department of Health and Ageing;
- Ms Jennifer Taylor, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace relations;
- officers representing the departments and agencies covered by the estimates before the committee.

1.7 The committee also considered budget expenditure at a hearing on 7 June 2013 on cross portfolio Indigenous matters pursuant to Resolution of the Senate of 26 August 2008.³ Explanations relating to the estimates were received from Senator the Hon Matt Thistlethwaite. Officers from the following portfolio Departments were in attendance:

- Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs;
- Health and Ageing; and
- Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

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

Questions on Notice

1.9 In accordance with Standing Order 26, the date for submission to the committee of written answers to questions or additional information relating to the expenditure is 26 July 2013. The committee notes that a forthcoming election, prorogation of parliament, or caretaker conventions have no effect on the requirement that answers to questions on notice be provided.

1.10 Answers to questions taken on notice and tabled documents relating to the committee's hearings will be tabled in the Senate. Answers to questions on notice and additional information may be accessed via the committee's website.

3 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 22, 26 August 2008, p. 683.

Hansard transcripts

1.11 The committee discussed many of the expenditure proposals and information contained in the PBS. These discussions are detailed in the committee's *Hansard* transcripts of 3 June 2013 to 7 June 2013 (inclusive), copies of which will be tabled in the Senate. *Hansard* transcripts of the estimates proceedings are also accessible on the committee's website at http://www.aph.gov.au/senate_ca.

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

Changes in the PBS

1.13 The committee notes Ministerial changes in the Human Services and Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs portfolios since the publication of the 2012-13 Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements:

- In the Human Services portfolio, on 25 March 2013 Senator the Hon. Jan McLucas was appointed as the Minister for Human Services;⁴
- In the Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs portfolio, on 25 March 2013 the Hon. Amanda Rishworth MP was appointed as the Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Carers.⁵

Procedural issues

1.14 No procedural issues were noted during the hearings.

4 Human Services, *Portfolio Budget Statements 2013-14*, p. 4, and The Hon. Julia Gillard, MP, Prime Minister of Australia, 'Changes to the Ministry', Media release, 25 March 2013.

5 Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, *Portfolio Budget Statements 2013-14*, p. 3, and The Hon. Julia Gillard, MP, Prime Minister of Australia, 'Changes to the Ministry', Media release, 25 March 2013.

Chapter 2

Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs Portfolio

Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

2.1 This chapter outlines key issues discussed during the 2013-2014 budget estimates hearings for the Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs portfolio.

2.2 The committee heard evidence from the department on Monday 3 June and Tuesday 4 June 2013. Areas of the portfolio and agencies were called in the following order:

- Cross Outcomes/Corporate Matters
- Social Security Appeals Tribunal
- Disability and Carers
- Seniors
- Women
- Workplace Gender Equality Agency
- Housing
- Families and Children
- Australian Institute of Family Studies
- Community Capability and the Vulnerable

Cross Outcomes/Corporate Matters¹

2.3 Proceedings commenced with questions in relation to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commissioner (ACNC). Senator Cash was interested in the relationship between the ACNC and the department. The department explained that their relationship is with the chief executive of the organisation, and outlined the role of the department in liaising with the ACNC.² Officers of the department explained that they had been working for some time with not-for-profit partners on improving efficiency, and as part of this established the program office in January 2013. The program office is currently in the process of bringing together all program related

1 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, p. 4.

2 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, p. 5.

activities into the one place, and the department expects this to be mostly complete by August 2013.³

2.4 The discussion then moved to general staffing questions, with the department noting that:

our slight reductions in staff are masked by the fact that we are implementing the National Disability Insurance Scheme, and at present DisabilityCare Australia, the agency, is part of the department. At some stage it will separate from the department.⁴

2.5 Under this outcome there was also a discussion around the department's social media policy, staff misconduct, particularly in relation to computer use, and advertising and media. In relation to advertising and media, there was an extended discussion in relation to the DisabilityCare Australia campaign. The department explained that the focus of the campaign will be around raising awareness among people with a disability of both the new agency, and eligibility and access to the scheme.

2.6 The committee also discussed the rebranding of the NDIS to DisabilityCare Australia, including when the decision was made to change the name of the program, and who was responsible for the decision.⁵ After discussing pay equity in the community sector in the aftermath of the SACS case,⁶ the department took a range of questions relating to costs on notice.⁷ Finally under cross outcomes the committee covered Freedom of Information Applications, employment demographics, performance payments, certain tenders put out by the department, and office locations.⁸

Social Security Appeals Tribunal (SSAT)⁹

2.7 Officers of the SSAT outlined various aspects of the corporate operations of the SSAT, including staffing, hospitality spending, professional development and training, before moving onto a discussion of the caseload of the Tribunal, including the average length of cases, number of appeals, and trends. Officers of the SSAT noted an increase in cases appealing Centrelink decisions from 2007.¹⁰

3 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, p. 6.

4 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, p. 6.

5 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, p. 23.

6 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, p. 19.

7 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, pp 25–26.

8 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, pp 26–29.

9 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, pp 29–33.

10 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, p. 31.

2.8 The committee was interested to find out the number of appeals from indigenous persons to the SSAT. There was also a discussion of the steps taken to ensure information about the availability of review with the SSAT is understood by providers of services to indigenous persons, including through community education.¹¹ The committee also discussed various aspects of the membership of the tribunal, including the number of members, their qualifications, and appointments and reappointments.

*Disability and Carers*¹²

2.9 Outcome 5 began with a discussion around re-entry into the disability support pension (DSP), including issues around portability and impairment ratings or capacity ratings. The committee also asked about the number of claims and rejections for the DSP and reasons for rejections. After lunch, the committee asked for more clarification about assessment and eligibility for the DSP, including putting questions on notice in relation to a further breakdown of medical and non-medical reasons for rejections.¹³ There was also an extended discussion about the effects of the review of the DSP impairment tables, including for people whose impairment is psychosocial, or who are under 35. The department noted that a report on the evaluation of the review of the impairment tables is due in 2014.¹⁴

2.10 The committee then asked about the PHAMS program and other programs in FaHCSIA, asking whether there is any overlap between these and the Partners in Recovery program run by the Department of Health and Ageing.¹⁵ The department noted they had worked closely with the Department of Health and Ageing during the development of the Partners in Recovery program, and that while there may be an overlap in cohort between the two programs, the roles of the programs are different. Ms Farrelly explained the differences between the programs, notably that:

Partners in Recovery is targeted at a much smaller population of people who have high support needs and have very complex interagency needs so that they require support to navigate the system to actually unblock difficulties that go between a whole range of sectors. PHAMS is one-on-one personal support. A person who comes to PHAMS is severely affected by their mental illness but would probably be drawn from a broader population. Those people need support in a range of life areas. That personal helper or mentor can help them do an individual recovery plan and then work through their plan so that they can basically live with their mental illness or recover from it.¹⁶

11 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, p. 31.

12 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, pp 33–81.

13 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, p. 38.

14 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, p. 42.

15 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, p. 39.

16 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, p. 39.

2.11 After a discussion of the numbers of people benefitting from the carer payment and carer supplement, the committee moved to questions around the Business Skills Wage Assessment Tool (BSWAT), which until recently was used by employers of people with a disability as a tool to determine wages. The department noted that the BSWAT is currently suspended as the High Court dismissed the Commonwealth's application to appeal the Full Federal Court decision disallowing the tool. The committee was interested to find out what is currently happening for people coming into an Australian Disability Enterprise (ADE), and what options were available to government in the absence of the BSWAT. The department explained that ADEs have their own enterprise agreements, over which the department neither has control nor collects data, and that these organisations are free to seek their own industrial advice. The Department noted, however, that Fair Work Australia have agreed that, as part of ADE assessments, it will not record non-conformities.¹⁷ As the department was still in the processes of advising the government on alternative options, it declined to go into detail about these.

2.12 The committee then moved to a lengthy discussion over various aspects of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, which will formally transfer into the new agency, DisabilityCare Australia, on 1 July 2013.¹⁸ The committee first discussed advocacy funding, and how funding outside of NDIS funding was to be made available for advocacy. The department explained that the National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP), which is the existing Commonwealth program providing funding to organisations for advocacy, will continue, and that extra funds in Program 5.6 are going towards an external merits review process that will be managed through the NDAP by FaHCSIA (rather than DisabilityCare Australia) as an additional component.¹⁹

2.13 The department outlined both the external merits review process and internal review within DisabilityCare Australia. Ms Angus explained that the role of advocacy funded by the department in the external merits review process would be to support the person rather than legally advocate on their behalf.²⁰ In regards to internal review, funding for advocacy here would be through broader support for people in putting their plans together, within the agency. Once an internal review decision is appealed, advocacy support and the funding therein would come from outside the agency.

2.14 The committee also asked questions around the set-up of the new agency, including around the choice of Geelong as the site for the main headquarters, and the number of jobs in the Agency as at January 2014, compared to the anticipated number of positions required to support the Agency when it has been fully rolled out. The committee also clarified that the national and regional office in Geelong are being

17 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, p. 47.

18 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, p. 48.

19 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, p. 49.

20 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, p. 50.

kept separate, and discussed the spread of regional offices generally, including possibilities for co-location with other FaHCSIA or Human Services locations, IT requirements, and the potential for contracting some activities out to specialised organisations.

2.15 In relation to the Disability Care agency, the committee also discussed the following matters:

- Remuneration for the chair of the Board of the Agency;
- The skill set of Board Members;
- Funding for the Agency under the Medicare levy;²¹
- The progress of negotiations between the Commonwealth and Western Australia;²²
- Rules around compensation payments;
- Research and consultation around the name of the Agency;
- Eligibility for the scheme;
- The communication campaign;
- Interaction with the aged care system and reforms;²³ and
- Early intervention for children with autism and other specific scenarios.

*Seniors*²⁴

2.16 Under this outcome the committee inquired into the additional funding included in the 2013-14 budget for the Broadband for Seniors program. The department outlined the aspects of the program which are being extended, which includes the provision of new computers for Broadband for Seniors Kiosks, and training for staff in the kiosks.

2.17 The committee also discussed the Housing Help for Seniors Pilot, asking the department to provide numbers of people expected to take-up the incentive, or be eligible, the eligibility requirements, interaction of the pilot with aged care services and reforms, and the cost of the program.²⁵ The department noted that other discussions around the mechanics of the pilot are ongoing.

2.18 The committee also discussed pension increases and the seniors work bonus.

21 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, pp 63–64.

22 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, p. 65.

23 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, pp 76–77.

24 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, pp 81–85.

25 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, p. 82.

Women²⁶

2.19 Under outcome 6 the committee asked questions about training programs run by the Office for Women for staff of other departments, as well as training for staff within the Office. The Office also tabled a document outlining programs and services delivered under outcome 6.

2.20 The committee then discussed the issue of gender balance on boards, including a recent publication on the issue, AICD board diversity scholarships, monitoring the number of women on boards;²⁷ Board Links and Ausgovboards (although the department noted that this initiative is headed by the Department of Finance).²⁸

2.21 Other topics covered by the committee included:

- research and data from the Work Life Family survey;
- Activities around International Women's Day;
- The National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security; and
- The COAG Reform Council and the COAG Select Council on Women's Issues.

***Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA)*²⁹**

2.22 The WGEA discussed their experience of companies reporting to them under the new *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*, and the Agency's work on increasing the number of organisations identified as covered by the act. The committee also asked questions about representation of companies in implementation groups,³⁰ the Agency's IT system, and its education strategy, which is currently being finalised.

***Housing*³¹**

2.23 Discussion of Outcome 2 began with questions about the one year transitional agreement on the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness. The committee was interested to find out why only a one year agreement had been signed.³² In discussing funding, Senator Payne expressed disappointment that the department could not at the time break down the funding under the transitional agreement into the

26 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, pp 85–99.

27 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, p. 87.

28 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, p. 94.

29 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, pp 92–94.

30 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, p. 93.

31 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, pp 99–124.

32 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, p. 104.

funding committed by the Commonwealth and the funding committed by the states and territories for each jurisdiction.³³ The committee also discussed the competitive development fund under the transitional agreement, the work going into a longer term Agreement and the government's response to the Auditor-General's report into the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness.³⁴ The department noted the need to be clear about what is being funded through the different agreements, particularly in working on longer term responses to homelessness. The department also tabled a communique in relation to a meeting of the Prime Minister's Council on Homelessness and discussed the COAG Select Council on Housing and Homelessness meetings.

2.24 The committee also had questions about the Housing Payment Deduction Scheme and the Public Housing Tenants' Support Bill, before moving onto questions around the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS). The committee discussed issues in relation to the next rounds of the NRAS including linkage with the Livable Housing Design Guidelines and other aspects of the guidelines and selection criteria.³⁵ The committee also inquired into the number of incentives allocated to date under NRAS, internal review of the scheme, trading incentives,³⁶ and the impact of NRAS projects on local communities.³⁷

2.25 On being informed that questions around affordable home ownership were the responsibility of Treasury portfolio, Senator Ludlam remarked that this is "the last bit of fragmentation in this portfolio, which is a shame".³⁸ The committee also had questions on social housing, as well as the use of Australian made building materials in projects receiving funding under the National Rental Affordability Scheme.³⁹

Families and Children⁴⁰

2.26 The committee commenced with questions around support for persons affected by past forced adoption practices included in the 2013-14 budget. The department noted that the funding is for support services and that FaHCSIA is now responsible for coordinating the whole of government approach.⁴¹ The committee also inquired into the modelling used by the department to determine need for support

33 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, p. 99.

34 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, pp 101–102.

35 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, p. 111.

36 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, p. 121.

37 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, p. 122.

38 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, p. 115.

39 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 3 June 2013, p. 117.

40 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, pp 3–34.

41 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 4.

services, progress around setting up the working group,⁴² and the interaction between the Commonwealth's approach and that of the states and territories.⁴³

2.27 The committee then discussed support services related to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, including components of funding for support, and tenders for services. The department noted that its funding for support is not directed specifically to people giving evidence to the Commission, but for survivors generally, and that the Attorney-General's Department has responsibility for support for people giving evidence.⁴⁴

2.28 There was a range of questions around the Family Support Program, and sub-programs under this. The committee was also interested in specific outreach programs in Western Australia,⁴⁵ and there was a wider discussion around the Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Client Access Strategy, including outreach to rural areas in Western Australia, indigenous communities, and the general aspects of the strategy.⁴⁶

2.29 The committee also discussed the Family Tax Benefit, the Schoolkids Bonus, the Baby Bonus, Paid Parental Leave, Dad or Partner Pay, and the double orphan pension.

Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS)⁴⁷

2.30 The AIFS explained that increases in the Institute's expenditure in 2012-13 are due to it being asked to establish the Australian Gambling Research Centre, and also growth in contracted research for the institute. The committee had questions for the Institute about its longitudinal studies, and the nature of the gambling research being undertaken, as well as research into forced adoptions, grandparents raising their grandchildren, Kinship care, and gay and lesbian families.

Community Capability and the Vulnerable⁴⁸

2.31 After specific questions about the funding for a range of projects under the Financial Management Program,⁴⁹ the committee moved to a discussion around financial counselling. The department noted that additional funding was included in the budget for additional counsellors to assist people affected by problem gambling, and that a drop off in funding for the Money Management Information and Education

42 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 16.

43 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 17.

44 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 5.

45 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 18.

46 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 22.

47 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, pp 34–39.

48 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, pp 39–53.

49 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 39.

program was due to funding being tied up in the income management program, the funding for which terminates in 2013-14. The committee was also interested in the rural financial counselling service,⁵⁰ and the work that the department is doing with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry in this area. FaHCSIA officers noted that while the two departments are running separately managed programs, organisations may apply for funding for both more general financial counselling and the specific funding for a specialist rural financial counsellor. There is no formal arrangement between the departments at this stage but FaHCSIA is participating in the DAFF policy development process for this program.

2.32 The committee then moved to questions around measures directed to tackling problem gambling, beginning with a discussion about the National Gambling Regulator,⁵¹ then moving to further discussion on the Australian Gambling Research and preparations for pre-commitment trials in the ACT.⁵² Finally the committee asked for an update on income management, including on the matched savings scheme and options for when the BasicsCard ceases in 2015-16.

50 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 43.

51 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 44.

52 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 49.

Chapter 3

Human Services Portfolio

Department of Human Services

3.1 This chapter outlines key issues discussed during the 2013-2014 budget estimates hearings for the Human Services Portfolio.

3.2 The committee heard evidence from the department on Tuesday 4 June 2013. Areas of the portfolio were called in the following order:

- Australian Hearing
- Corporate
- Services to the Community
- Child Support

*Australian Hearing*¹

3.3 Questions began on the Agency's work with people in the justice system.² Australian Hearing noted that eligibility for clients has not changed and that there has not been further progress in this area.

3.4 The agency also clarified its role in relation to the rollout of DisabilityCare Australia, noting there will be no change in service delivery, but confirming that consultation between Australian Hearing and DisabilityCare Australia around the rollout is ongoing.³

3.5 Other items discussed by the committee included:

- The Rehab plus service;
- Statistics showing evidence of an increase in mild hearing loss and the uptake of hearing devices;⁴
- Relationship to and with the Department of Human Services; and
- General staff and corporate questions.⁵

1 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, pp 56–61.

2 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 56.

3 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 59.

4 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 57.

5 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 60.

Corporate⁶

3.6 Corporate questions began with the committee requesting outlines of the savings that the department expected to be achieved from 2013-14 budget measures and other efficiencies.⁷ Ms Campbell noted that the department has been implementing its service delivery reform program for two years, as part of the four-year program, which will produce further efficiencies which have been taken into account in the forward estimates.⁸ The department noted that there are two key areas of service delivery reform which are expected to deliver savings: simplifying and automating transactional type processing and letters; and better workforce management.⁹ The committee was interested particularly in the savings produced by moving to online letters.¹⁰

3.7 The committee also discussed the department's increase in compliance reviews, which was included in the 2013-14 budget papers.¹¹ Senator Fifield queried why the compliance review was only focused on one year. Ms Campbell explained that:

Often with these compliance measures government decides to do a year's worth and have a look at what the results are to determine whether the investment is worth while and what we actually find from undertaking these compliance reviews.¹²

3.8 Mr Popple then informed the committee that this year was chosen because the tax data from this particular year was already available to the department.¹³ The committee followed this up with questions about the methodology used by the department to calculate the savings it expected to be generated from the various reforms, including the measure to improve Medicare benefits scheme billing practices within public hospitals.¹⁴ The committee finally asked the department to look back over the previous budget to see whether DHS had met targeted savings.¹⁵ The department noted that while the financial year has not yet concluded, it is broadly on

6 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, pp 61–71.

7 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 61.

8 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 62.

9 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 63.

10 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 63.

11 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 65.

12 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 65.

13 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 66.

14 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, pp 66–67.

15 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 68.

target to achieve the planned savings under each of the measures. Under corporate the committee also discussed call centre supplement funding.¹⁶

*Services to the Community*¹⁷

3.9 Following from the corporate discussion of call centre funding, the committee had a range of questions in relation to Smart Centres, beginning with a discussion of wait times. The department outlined various statistics in relation to wait times, noting that the change in practice away from blocking calls had resulted in increased wait times. The committee also discussed right of entry notices exercised in relation to Smart Centres,¹⁸ locations, and the e-reference guide used by staff in the centres.¹⁹

3.10 The committee also inquired into the proportion of staff employed in media and communications roles.²⁰ The department noted that there has been a reduction in the number of public affairs officer roles from 253 to 70, since providing the committee with an answer to a previous question on notice. The committee also inquired into the number of staff monitoring social media, or monitoring media more broadly.²¹ The department took a question on notice to provide an organisation chart of the new public affairs arrangements.

3.11 There was a brief discussion in relation to the replacement of CUBA IT system, which currently supports the transfer of child support payments between parents.²² The Department explained that the existing legacy system is obsolete and that a review had identified a need for an improved system with capacity to be flexible, especially in response to changes in legislation. The committee then moved to discussion about the smartphone applications developed by the department, including recent awards received.²³ The department outlined the four applications that the department currently has available – one for students, one for jobseekers, one for families, and one for seniors, and also described the types of activities people are able to complete through the applications. The department also noted the prevalence of smartphones in low socioeconomic demographics and in remote Indigenous communities.²⁴ The final discussion around the IT space concerned the recently launched myGov system.²⁵

16 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 69.

17 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, pp 71–100.

18 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 75.

19 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 77.

20 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 78.

21 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 79.

22 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 80.

23 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 81.

24 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 81.

25 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 82.

3.12 The committee also discussed the discretion of the FaHCSIA Secretary in relation to payments.²⁶ The department took on notice to provide advice on how decision making occurs generally and also in exceptional cases.²⁷

3.13 There were a range of questions from the committee relating to staff in the department, including around the recruitment of staff, particularly during the time that Senator the Hon Kim Carr was minister for Human Services, and the casualisation of the DHS workforce.²⁸ The committee also discussed staff uniforms, name badges and nameplates, before moving to staff misconduct. Under this area there were questions around unauthorised staff access to sensitive information,²⁹ and complaints received against staff. The committee also discussed how complaints are registered, appeals from Centrelink decisions to the SSAT,³⁰ internal review, complaints investigated by the ombudsman, and errors and wrongful claims for Centrelink payments.³¹

3.14 Senator Edwards was interested in figures around the increase or decrease of benefits paid to people living in his electorate over the last five years.³² The department agreed to work through the payments identified by the Senator, and provide information that would allow the committee to see year by year changes that may have occurred in relation to these payments. The committee then moved to a more general discussion of youth unemployment.

3.15 The committee also discussed the following items:

- Co-location of service centres;³³
- Medicare electronic claiming options;
- Youth allowance, particularly in relation to the number of applications from regional and remote students applying;
- Job Skills expos and how these are working in areas that have been subject to natural disasters, such as in Queensland;³⁴
- Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payments;³⁵ and

26 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 82.

27 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 83.

28 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 86.

29 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 89.

30 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 90.

31 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 93.

32 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 91.

33 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 94.

34 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 98.

35 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 99.

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- The interaction of services provided by the Department of Human Services and the current aged care reforms.

Child Support³⁶

3.16 The committee's brief discussion of child support began with a question inquiring about a publication of a report some years previously by the Child Support Agency, *Child support scheme facts and figures*. The department noted that they did not have any knowledge of the report, but that information about the child support program is now included in its annual report.

3.17 The committee asked questions in relation to appeals of decisions by the Child Support Agency, and complaints about the agency that have been investigated by the ombudsman.

36 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 4 June 2013, p. 101.

Chapter 4

Health and Ageing Portfolio

Department of Health and Ageing

4.1 This chapter contains key issues discussed during the 2013-2014 budget estimates hearings for the Health and Ageing portfolio.

4.2 The committee heard evidence from the department on Wednesday 5 and Thursday 6 June 2013. Areas of the portfolio and agencies were called in the following order:

- Whole of Portfolio/Corporate Matters
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
- Acute Care
- National Health Performance Authority
- Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority
- Mental Health
- Aged Care and Population Ageing
- Aged Care Standards Accreditation Agency
- Health System Capacity and Quality
- Access to Medical Services
- Health Workforce Capacity
- Health Workforce Australia (HWA)
- Primary Care
- National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)
- Population Health
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ)
- Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR)
- Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA)
- Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA)
- Cancer Australia
- Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC)
- Australian National Preventive Health Agency (ANPHA)

- Biosecurity and Emergency Response
- Private Health
- Rural Health
- Access to Pharmaceutical Services
- Hearing Services

4.3 The committee also heard evidence from the National e-Health Transition Authority (NeHTA) under the department's "Health System Capacity and Quality" area.

Whole of Portfolio/Corporate Matters¹

4.4 Senator Fierravanti-Wells began by first thanking the department for providing a budget reporting element (BRE) chart to the committee, and asked if this chart could be updated in line with the 2013-14 budget.² The committee then discussed advertisements on Victorian hospital funding, before moving to other general advertising costs for the department, including around budget funding of \$10m for a communications campaign about Medicare.³ The department noted that the campaign was still subject to government approval, but that officers could discuss the rationale for the advertising that has been put to the Independent Communications Committee (ICC).⁴

4.5 There was also a general discussion on staffing in the department, including questions about the ratio between APS staff and EL staff, and work by the department to increase the number of more junior APS staff relative to middle management.⁵

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)⁶

4.6 Senator Rhiannon referred the AIHW to a 2005 publication around abortion statistics. The AIHW confirmed that this is the latest data they have available, and that they do not intend to do further work at this stage, due primarily to funding constraints.⁷ The committee then discussed a range of other research conducted by the Institute, including research into rising hospital admissions for older Australians,⁸ and health outcomes that may be used to measure the success of income management

1 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, pp 6–24.

2 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 7.

3 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 11.

4 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 14.

5 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 16.

6 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, pp 20–24.

7 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 20.

8 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 21.

programs. The AIHW noted that they are currently working on the next version of *Australia's welfare*, which features some work looking at poverty, low income and wealth amongst particular groups, and will also have some specific work on workforce participation by older Australians.⁹ The AIHW also ran the committee through its current work program,¹⁰ and provided an overview of work being done to improve the accessibility of its research.¹¹

*Acute Care*¹²

4.7 This outcome commenced with a discussion about leave for living organ donors. The department explained that money had only been committed to the program for two years because it is a trial which will be evaluated after this period. The committee also discussed eligibility for the trial, and the rationale around providing the payment to the employer, rather than the donor.¹³ Senator Smith was also interested in the incidence of Australians travelling overseas to receive organ transplants. Neither the department nor the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority were aware of substantive data on this issue, or the number hospital admissions as a result.¹⁴

4.8 There was then an extended discussion around payments directed to Victorian local hospital networks.¹⁵ The department outlined the process by which the government decided to reinstate money that had been withdrawn from the local hospital networks as a result of the Victorian government passing on parameter variations contained in the Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook.¹⁶ The department clarified that this had been an unusual occurrence in one particular jurisdiction, and that the payments were also outside the national health reform agreement funding flows. Senator Di Natale was interested to find out why Victoria had been considered a special case, and the department explained that while all states had been subject to a parameter variation in their funding from the Commonwealth, it was only Victoria that immediately passed that on as cuts to local hospital networks.¹⁷ Professor Halton also noted that there were unexpended Commonwealth funds directed to Victoria that were able to be reallocated to the local hospital networks.

9 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 22.

10 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 23.

11 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 24.

12 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, pp 25–44.

13 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 26.

14 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 28.

15 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 31.

16 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 32.

17 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 34.

4.9 The committee also discussed the National Health Reform Amendment (Definitions) Bill,¹⁸ and budget measures directed to dental care,¹⁹ including National Partnership Agreements for dental care,²⁰ and the Grow up Smiling Initiative.²¹

National Health Performance Authority (NHPA)²²

4.10 Discussion with the NHPA centred on the Performance and Accountability Framework for Medicare Locals. The committee was interested in the Authority's timeline for publishing reports covering assessment of Medicare Locals, and in how the Authority determines the order in which they create reports.²³

Mental Health²⁴

4.11 Discussion of mental health commenced with a number of questions about Early Psychosis Prevention and Intervention Centres (EPPICs). The committee sought clarification around funding for EPPICs in the forward estimates,²⁵ the locations of the centres,²⁶ and governance of EPPIC sites being delivered by headspace.²⁷ The department outlined how the EPPIC services will be rolled out through the headspace model.²⁸

4.12 The committee then moved to questions on the Partners in Recovery Program,²⁹ including around evaluation of the program and any overlap with DisabilityCare Australia. Senator Fierravanti-Wells was interested in the number of Medicare Locals that had been selected as lead partners for the program. The committee also discussed the interaction of the Partners in Recovery program with the PHaMs program, confirming the description given by FaHCSIA officers earlier in the week.³⁰

18 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 39.

19 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 35.

20 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 36.

21 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 37.

22 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, pp 41–44.

23 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 41.

24 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, pp 44–64.

25 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 44.

26 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 46.

27 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 48.

28 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 49.

29 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 53.

30 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 62.

Aged Care and Population Ageing³¹

4.13 After responding to an inquiry into funding provided to seniors organisations,³² the department provided an update on the National LGBTI Aged Care Strategy, noting that it intends to report on the Strategy in October.³³

4.14 Discussion on aged care and population ageing then moved through the various elements of the aged care reform package. The committee discussed Home Support and Home Care,³⁴ and the department provided an update on Home and Community Care (HACC) funding.³⁵ There was then a discussion around the Aged Care Approval Round (ACAR) being delayed pending passage of the Living Longer. Living Better Bills.³⁶ The committee also discussed the My Aged Care website,³⁷ and general issues around the potential for any increase in the regulatory burden for residential care providers as a result of the reforms.³⁸

4.15 There was also a broad discussion on the Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI), and the department explained the circumstances leading to the revision of the instrument.³⁹ The committee also discussed dementia care,⁴⁰ hospital admissions for older people,⁴¹ and transition care.⁴²

Health System Capacity and Quality⁴³

4.16 Officers of the department confirmed that funding for the Personally Controlled Electronic Health Record (PCEHR) will expire on 30 June 2014,⁴⁴ and explained that the department is now working on a business case in respect of future e-health funding with the states and territories. The department provided an update on hospitals in Tasmania and Canberra coming onto the PCEHR system.⁴⁵ The

31 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, pp 64–94.

32 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 64.

33 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 65.

34 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 66.

35 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 69.

36 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 71.

37 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 75.

38 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 76.

39 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 78.

40 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 82.

41 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 85.

42 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 86.

43 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, pp 95–110.

44 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 95.

45 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 101.

committee also discussed e-health funding and the PCEHR in general and the continued funding of NeHTA, e-health in the ageing space,⁴⁶ assisted registration,⁴⁷ and promotional materials for the PCEHR.⁴⁸

Access to Medical Services⁴⁹

4.17 There was a brief return to the earlier discussion around abortion data,⁵⁰ before the committee moved to questions around the Extended Medicare Safety Net,⁵¹ including on expenditure over the forward estimates and the expected reduction in the number of people who will qualify after changes on 1 January 2015. In relation to Medicare, the committee also had questions about efforts to remove double billing,⁵² indexation,⁵³ and its effect on bulk billing.⁵⁴

Health Workforce Capacity⁵⁵

4.18 Questions under this outcome initially focused on the Mason Review of Australian Government Health Workforce Programs (Mason Review). The committee inquired into the cost of the review, and its recommendation that the Australian Standard Geographical Classification - Remoteness Area (ASGC-RA) be reformed. Senator Fawcett was interested in whether the committee's own report into this area was being considered in the government's response. In addressing a question about the timeline for the government's response, the department initially indicated that there was no definite deadline in place. Officers later agreed, however, that a timeframe for action had been published on the department's website.⁵⁶

4.19 The committee also discussed the makeup of rural classification technical working group,⁵⁷ bonded scholarships,⁵⁸ dental graduate programs,⁵⁹ the Nursing and

46 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 98.

47 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 99.

48 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 100.

49 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, pp 110–115.

50 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 110.

51 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 111.

52 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 112.

53 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 113.

54 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 114.

55 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, pp 115–129.

56 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 118.

57 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 117.

58 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 119.

59 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 121.

Allied Health Rural Locum Scheme,⁶⁰ and the General Practice Rural Incentives Program.⁶¹

Health Workforce Australia (HWA)⁶²

4.20 The committee discussed staff increases in the agency, and the clinical training funding program, before asking general questions around reports produced by the agency, the Rural Health Professionals Program, and workforce issues in remote and rural aged care.⁶³

Primary Care⁶⁴

4.21 Thursday morning began with a discussion of General Practitioner standards, including the role of the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care in developing these standards. The committee then briefly discussed the Tasmanian Health Assistance Package and Primary Care Infrastructure grants, before moving to a more extended discussion around Medicare Locals. Topics covered included the use of the term "Medicare",⁶⁵ current and future funding arrangements,⁶⁶ money earned independently by the organisations,⁶⁷ administration costs,⁶⁸ and activities engaged in by Medicare Locals.⁶⁹

4.22 The remainder of questions under this outcome were around GP Super Clinics. The department gave the committee an update on the remaining sites to be developed.⁷⁰ There were also questions about milestones for the Super Clinics,⁷¹ variations in funding agreements, performance and outcomes for the Super Clinics and the evaluation of the Super Clinic program.⁷²

60 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 122.

61 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 123.

62 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, pp 126–129.

63 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 5 June 2013, p. 128.

64 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, pp 5–30, 38–42.

65 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 9.

66 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 13.

67 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 16.

68 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 17.

69 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 20.

70 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 22.

71 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 25.

72 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 40.

National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)⁷³

4.23 The committee had general questions for the NHMRC in relation to approval processes for guidelines,⁷⁴ and around funding for various areas of research.⁷⁵ Senator Di Natale was interested in the Council's review into wind farms and health, especially public participation in the review.⁷⁶ There were also questions about potential conflicts of interest in observers to the NHMRC's reviews,⁷⁷ and processes for addressing unapproved research.⁷⁸

Population Health⁷⁹

4.24 The committee was provided with an update on the bowel screening program,⁸⁰ before asking some questions about breast screening, specifically in relation to the decentralisation of breast screening centres in Queensland.⁸¹ The budget measure addressed to reaching older women for breast screening was also discussed.⁸²

4.25 The committee then discussed drug policy, with the department providing an update on responses to the plain packaging legislation.⁸³ Here the committee had specific questions around compliance and enforcement for the legislation.⁸⁴ Discussion then moved to alcohol policy, with questions in relation to Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder,⁸⁵ especially in relation to pregnancy warning labels, and the National alcohol strategy.⁸⁶ The committee also discussed potential legislative measures and regulatory approaches to synthetic drugs,⁸⁷ and the misuse of legal pharmaceuticals.⁸⁸

73 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, pp 30–37.

74 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 30.

75 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 31.

76 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 33.

77 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 35.

78 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 37.

79 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, pp 42–93.

80 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 42.

81 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 42.

82 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 45.

83 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 43.

84 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 44.

85 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 46.

86 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 47.

87 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 53.

88 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 55.

4.26 After a discussion of regulatory policy for medical devices, including funding for medical device registries in the 2013-14 budget,⁸⁹ the committee discussed immunisation.⁹⁰ There were questions in relation to the Human Papilloma Virus vaccination program and a discussion around vaccine refusal.⁹¹

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) and the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR)⁹²

4.27 Senator Siewert asked FSANZ and then OGTR about issues around double stranded RNA in terms of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and genetically modified wheat.⁹³ There were also questions for FSANZ around levels of certain chemicals in imported foods,⁹⁴ and on testing and analysis of imported foods, although FSANZ clarified that their responsibility is to provide advice to the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, who are responsible for the actual testing of these products.⁹⁵

Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA)⁹⁶

4.28 There was a discussion with ARPANSA around safety culture in facilities, and around whistle-blowing and the avenues and protections for people who wish to report problems. Senator Ludlam put a question to the minister in relation to non-nuclear production of radioactive isotopes, and there was also a discussion of the government's response to the UN-System wide study of international nuclear safety, security and safeguards.⁹⁷

Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC)⁹⁸

4.29 There were general corporate questions for the Commission,⁹⁹ before the committee moved to a discussion around anti-microbial resistance.¹⁰⁰ The ACSQHC gave an update on the work of the Antimicrobial Resistance Standing Committee, and other activities in this area.

89 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 60.

90 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 68.

91 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 71.

92 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, pp 62–68.

93 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 63, and p. 66.

94 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 64.

95 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 65.

96 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, pp 76–80.

97 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 79.

98 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, pp 82–87.

99 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 83.

100 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 85.

Australian National Preventive Health Agency (ANPHA)¹⁰¹

4.30 The committee had questions for the ANPHA around its recent branding exercise, and also asked the agency to outline its current programs and projects. The committee was also interested in the work that ANPHA has done with Medicare Locals, and the status of the final report into *Exploring the public interest base for a minimum (floor) price for alcohol*.¹⁰²

Biosecurity and Emergency Response¹⁰³

4.31 The committee asked questions in relation to the replenishment of the National Medical Stockpile, including around the extension of dates for some of the medicines, disposal of the expired medicines, emerging biosecurity threats, and how the stockpile is configured to account for these. While the department noted that it is unable to comment on security threats, officers outlined some of the health threats that are being considered, particularly the H7N9 virus, which Professor Baggoley detailed for the committee.¹⁰⁴

Private Health¹⁰⁵

4.32 The committee discussed the Operations of Private Health Insurers annual report 2011-12, before a question was raised in relation to the Private Health Insurance Base Premium Bill. The Chair noted however that the bill was before the Senate and also being considered by the committee discussion should be reserved to that inquiry. The committee then moved to general questions in relation to pre-paid policy holders and the private health insurance rebates.

Access to Pharmaceutical Services¹⁰⁶

4.33 Senator Fierravanti-Wells had questions for the department in relation to extra funding in the 2013-14 budget for the supply of chemotherapy drugs.¹⁰⁷ The committee then moved to a discussion around measures taken by the department in response to the issue of patent evergreening. Senator Heffernan was particularly interested in this area, and the department undertook to supply the committee with the department's watch list of cases before the courts that are concerned with this issue.¹⁰⁸

101 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, pp 87–93.

102 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 92.

103 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, pp 94–97.

104 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 95.

105 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, pp 97–100.

106 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, pp 101–122.

107 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 102.

108 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 104.

4.34 There was an extended discussion around the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, particularly in relation to the processes involving the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Council (PBAC), price disclosure, and post market reviews. The committee also discussed the Alzheimer's Review,¹⁰⁹ the Diabetes Review, and the Life Saving Drugs Program.¹¹⁰

*Hearing Services*¹¹¹

4.35 In the final session for the evening the Office for Hearing Services provided the committee with an update on the response to recommendations contained in the *Hear Us Inquiry into Hearing Services in Australia* report. Questions on notice were taken in relation to services for young people, neonatal screening, and data collection. The committee also discussed a regulatory review that is being undertaken in relation to the legislative framework of one of the components of the program,¹¹² the Office's work with DisabilityCare Australia,¹¹³ and work to raise awareness among young people about hearing loss.¹¹⁴

109 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 116.

110 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 119.

111 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, pp 122–128.

112 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 124.

113 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 125.

114 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 6 June 2013, p. 127.

Chapter 5

Cross Portfolio Indigenous Matters

5.1 This chapter contains key issues discussed during the 2013-2014 budget estimates hearings for cross portfolio Indigenous matters pursuant to Resolution of the Senate of 26 August 2008.¹ The following portfolio departments were in attendance:

- Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
- Health and Ageing
- Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

5.2 The committee heard evidence from portfolio departments on Friday 7 June 2013. Areas of the portfolios were called in the following order:

- General Matters
- Closing the Gap
- Stronger Futures
- Health Issues
- Indigenous Land Corporation
- Indigenous Business Australia
- Employment and Economic Development
- Indigenous Housing

*General Matters*²

5.3 Discussion under general matters began with a return to questions around the resignation and reappointment of Indigenous Land Corporation CEO Bruce Gemmill. Senator Scullion tabled a letter from the minister to the former Chair of the Indigenous Land Corporation concerning processes around CEO appointments. The committee then discussed the Commonwealth's role in the provision of municipal services,³ before moving to questions around a particular grant directed to putting on a cultural festival in Alice Springs.⁴

1 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 22, 26 August 2008, p. 683.

2 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, pp 4–11.

3 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, p. 7.

4 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, p. 9.

Closing the Gap and Stronger Futures⁵

5.4 Discussion commenced with questions about the review process for the National Indigenous Reform Agreement (NIRA). FaHCSIA officers noted that the review was conducted through COAG processes and that results of the review could be found on the COAG website.⁶ The committee then had questions around the latest Closing the Gap Report, including around life expectancy, and the breakdown of data. The department confirmed that the next set of life expectancy data published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics would be able to be broken down by remoteness region.⁷ The committee also discussed Closing the Gap literacy and numeracy targets,⁸ before moving to a discussion of early childhood education targets and early intervention programs.

5.5 The committee's questions under stronger futures focused on referrals to income management through the current Northern Territory Alcohol and Other Drugs Tribunal. The Northern Territory Government announced its proposal to disband the tribunal in May, and there was a general discussion around what the process around income management referrals will be once the Tribunal is disbanded.⁹

Health Issues¹⁰

5.6 The committee asked officers from the Department of Health and Ageing to provide an update on the negotiations around renewing the National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes.¹¹ The committee was interested in the progress of implementation plans and agreements with the Northern Territory on which some components of Commonwealth health funding were contingent,¹² such as some funding for community health organisations.

5.7 The committee then asked a range of questions about efforts to curb indigenous smoking.¹³ The committee inquired into funding and evaluation for the program and into the in-school component for the anti-smoking program.¹⁴

5 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, pp. 11–18.

6 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, p. 11.

7 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, p. 12.

8 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, p. 14.

9 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, p. 17.

10 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, pp. 18–45.

11 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, p. 18.

12 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, p. 23.

13 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, p. 25.

14 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, p. 27.

5.8 The committee's discussion of indigenous mental health focused particularly on measures to prevent suicide amongst indigenous Australians.¹⁵ There was then an extended discussion of renal services.¹⁶ Officers of the Department of Health and Ageing provided the committee with some detail about the movement of unexpended funds to support work in this area.¹⁷ The committee expressed concern over the potential for funds directed to renal services to be lost, as state and territory governments hold responsibility for renal service provision, and extra services directed to dialysis are contingent on agreements between the Commonwealth and the particular state or territory.

5.9 The committee also had questions about the government's discussions with the Northern Territory around the Alcohol Mandatory Treatment Bill,¹⁸ and measures directed to combatting petrol sniffing, particularly around storage facilities for low aromatic fuel in Darwin and other areas.¹⁹

Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC)²⁰

5.10 There was a discussion with the ILC and officers of FaHCSIA around the processes for providing answers to questions on notice.²¹ Senator Scullion then moved to questions around the legislative criteria governing the makeup of the ILC board, and other questions about governance of the Agency.

Indigenous Business Australia (IBA)²²

5.11 Senator Scullion began by congratulating the IBA on actions to improve the employment outcomes of the investments held by the Agency.²³ There were then questions for the agency about additional funding for certain investments,²⁴ and the legal obligations of the Agency in relation to its involvement in the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park.²⁵ At the end this session, Mr Chris Fry, CEO, tabled a letter from himself to the committee which addressed a matter reported in the media with reference to Mr Fry's role as CEO in appearing before the committee during Senate Estimates.

15 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, p. 29.

16 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, p. 33.

17 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, p. 34.

18 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, p. 40.

19 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, p. 43.

20 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, pp 46–52.

21 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, p. 47.

22 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June, pp 52–56.

23 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, p. 52.

24 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, p. 54.

25 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, p. 55.

Employment and Economic Development²⁶

5.12 There was a wide ranging discussion on the Remote Jobs and Communities Program (RJCP), including around the announcement of providers approved for the program, and plans in place for these organisations to be operational commencing 1 July 2013. Officers of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations provided an explanation of the allocation of funding among RJCP regions.²⁷ There was also a discussion of the application process for the program, including around selection criteria for applications.²⁸ Other items discussed included:

- Community Action Plans (CAPs);
- Community Development Fund (CDF);²⁹ and
- the Indigenous Youth Careers pathway program.³⁰

Indigenous Housing³¹

5.13 The final item on the program commenced with a discussion around the Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program (SIHIP), focusing on elements around the wind-up of this program, such as the number of people who completed apprenticeships or training under the SIHIP.³² The committee also discussed the Home ownership on Indigenous Land Program,³³ and the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (NPARIH).³⁴ Officers of FaHCSIA provided the committee with a copy of the latest review of the NPARIH, and answered questions about land tenure reform, and work to achieve leasing in the Northern Territory.

Senator Claire Moore Chair

26 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, pp 56–71.

27 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, p. 58.

28 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, p. 61.

29 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, p. 68.

30 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, p. 70.

31 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, pp 71–77.

32 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, p. 73.

33 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, p. 74.

34 *Proof Estimates Hansard*, 7 June 2013, p. 77.

Appendix 1

Departments and agencies under the Committee's oversight¹

Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs Portfolio

- Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA)
- Australian Institute of Family Studies
- Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA)

Health and Ageing Portfolio

- Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA)
- Australian National Preventive Health Agency (ANPHA)
- Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority
- Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA)
- Cancer Australia
- Independent Hospital Pricing Authority
- National Blood Authority
- National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)
- National Health Funding Body (NHFB)
- National Health Performance Authority
- Private Health Insurance Ombudsman
- Professional Services Review Scheme

Human Services Portfolio

- Department of Human Services (DHS)

1 This document has been prepared based on the Department of Finance and Deregulation's *Chart of 110 Agencies under the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 (FMA Act)* as at 23 April 2013, <http://www.finance.gov.au/publications/flipchart/docs/FMACACFlipchart.pdf>

Appendix 2

Commonwealth Authorities and Companies under the Committee's oversight¹

Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs Portfolio

- Aboriginal Hostels Limited
- Anindilyakwa Land Council
- Central Land Council
- Indigenous Business Australia
- Indigenous Land Corporation
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Launch Transition Agency
- Northern Land Council
- Outback Stores Pty Ltd
- Tiwi Land Council
- Torres Strait Regional Authority
- Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community Council

Health and Ageing Portfolio

- Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency Ltd
- Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand
- General Practice Education and Training Limited
- Health Workforce Australia
- Private Health Insurance Administration Council

Human Services Portfolio

- Australian Hearing Services (Australian Hearing)

1 This document has been prepared based on the Department of Finance and Deregulation's *Chart of 84 bodies under the Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997 (CAC Act)* as at 23 April 2013,
<http://www.finance.gov.au/publications/flipchart/docs/FMACACFlipchart.pdf>

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¹ Hansard page numbers referred to in this appendix are based on proof Hansards. Page numbers may vary slightly in the final official Hansard transcripts.

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