

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

1.1 On 12 May 2015, the Senate referred the following documents to the committee for examination and report:

- Particulars of proposed expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2016;
- Particulars of certain proposed expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2016;
- Particulars of proposed expenditure in relation to the parliamentary departments in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2016;
- Particulars of proposed additional expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2015; and
- Particulars of certain proposed additional expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2015.

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

- Health;
- Social Services; and
- Human Services.

### Details of hearings

1.3 The hearings were conducted in accordance with the agreed agenda outlined as follows:

- 1 and 2 June 2015 — Health portfolio
- 3 June 2015 — Human Services and Social Services portfolio
- 4 and 5 June 2015 — Social Services portfolio

1.4 The committee heard evidence from the following Senators:

- Senator the Hon Fiona Nash, Assistant Minister for Health (and representing the Minister for Health);
- Senator the Hon Marise Payne, Minister for Human Services;
- Senator the Hon Mitch Fifield, Assistant Minister for Social Services (representing the Minister for Social Services); and
- Senator the Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Social Services (representing the Minister for Social Services).

1.5 Evidence was also provided by the following:

- Mr Martin Bowles PSM, Secretary of the Department of Health;
- Ms Kathryn Campbell, Secretary of the Department of Human Services;
- Mr Finn Pratt, Secretary of the Department of Social Services; and
- officers representing the departments and agencies covered by the estimates before the committee.

### **Questions on notice**

1.6 In accordance with Standing Order 26(9)(a), the committee agreed that the date for the return of answers in response to questions placed on notice would be 24 July 2015.

1.7 Answers to questions on notice and tabled documents may be accessed via the committee's website: [http://www.aph.gov.au/senate\\_ca](http://www.aph.gov.au/senate_ca).

### **Hansard transcripts**

1.8 *Hansard* transcripts of the estimates proceedings are accessible on the committee's website.

1.9 An index of topics covered by Hansard page number is available at Appendix 2.

1.10 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**

#### ***Health Portfolio***

1.11 In the Portfolio Budget Statements the government announced the following changes to portfolio agencies:

- The Australian Organ and Tissue Donation Transplantation Authority and National Blood Authority will merge to create a new independent body;
- the functions of the Private Health Insurance Administration Council will be transferred to the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority and the Department of Health (subject to the passage of legislation by the Parliament);
- the responsibilities of the Private Health Insurance Ombudsman are being transferred to the Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman (subject to the passage of legislation by the Parliament); and
- a proposed new Health Productivity and Performance Commission.<sup>1</sup>

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1 Portfolio Budget Statements 2015–16, *Health Portfolio*, pp 3–4.