

Chapter 1

Additional Estimates 2015-16

1.1 On 4 February 2016 the Senate referred the following to the Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee (the committee) for examination and report:

- Particulars of proposed additional expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2016 [Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2015-2016];
- Particulars of certain proposed additional expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2016 [Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2015-2016]; and
- Final Budget Outcome 2014-15.¹

Portfolio coverage

1.2 The committee has responsibility for examining the expenditure and outcomes of the following:

- Parliament;²
- Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) Portfolio;
- Finance Portfolio; and
- Cross Portfolio Indigenous Matters.

Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements 2015-16

1.3 The Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements (PAES) 2015-16 for the PM&C Portfolio and the Finance Portfolio were tabled in the Senate on 4 February 2016.³

1.4 The PAES for the PM&C Portfolio contain additional estimates statements for the Department of the PM&C and the Digital Transformation Office,⁴ advising that these are the only agencies in the portfolio affected by changes in resourcing since the publication of the Portfolio Budget Estimates 2015-16.⁵

1 *Journals of the Senate No. 137*, 4 February 2016, p. 3720.

2 As a matter of comity between the Houses neither House inquires into the operations of the other House. For this reason, neither the annual report of, nor the proposed expenditure for, the Department of the House of Representatives is referred to a Senate committee for review.

3 *Journals of the Senate No. 137*, 4 February 2016, p. 3720.

4 The Digital Transformation Office was transferred from the Communications and Arts Portfolio to the PM&C Portfolio on 21 September 2015.

5 *Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements 2015-16 Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio*, p. 9.

1.5 The Finance Portfolio PAES advise that additional estimates and variations were being sought by the Department of Finance and the Australian Electoral Commission.⁶

Hearings

1.6 The committee held public hearings on 8, 9, 12 and 22 February 2016. The parliamentary departments were examined on 8 February, the PM&C Portfolio (excluding Indigenous matters) was examined on 8 and 22 February, the Finance Portfolio was examined on 9 February, and the Cross Portfolio Indigenous Matters hearing was held on 12 February 2016.

1.7 The committee took evidence from the President of the Senate, Senator the Hon Stephen Parry, and the following Ministers accompanied by officers of relevant departments and agencies:

- Senator the Hon George Brandis, Attorney-General, representing the Prime Minister;
- Senator the Hon James McGrath, Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister and Assistant Minister for Immigration
- Senator the Hon Mathias Cormann, Minister for Finance and Special Minister of State
- Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash, Minister for Employment, Minister for Women, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service
- Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion, Minister for Indigenous Affairs.

1.8 The committee expresses its appreciation for the assistance of the President, Ministers and the officers who appeared.

1.9 Over the course of the hearings, the committee took evidence from the following departments, agencies and statutory officers:

Parliament

- Department of the Senate
- Parliamentary Budget Office
- Department of Parliamentary Services
- Parliamentary Services Commissioner

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (including the Office for Women and excluding Outcome 2 – Indigenous)
- Australian Public Service Commission
- Independent National Security Legislation Monitor

6 *Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements 2015-16 Finance Portfolio*, p. 3.

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- Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General
 - Australian National Audit Office
 - Office of the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security
 - Digital Transformation Office

Finance Portfolio

- Department of Finance
- ASC Pty Ltd
- Future Fund Management Agency
- Australian Electoral Commission
- Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation

Cross Portfolio Indigenous Matters

- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (Outcome 2 – Indigenous)
- Department of Health (in relation to Indigenous Health issues)
- Indigenous Business Australia
- Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations
- Outback Stores Pty Ltd
- Office of Township Leasing

1.10 The Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman was released without examination prior to its appearance time on 8 February 2016.

Questions on notice and Hansard transcripts

1.11 The committee has set 1 April 2016 as the date for the return of answers to questions on notice arising from the Additional Estimates 2015-16 hearings. This information, together with the Hansard transcripts of proceedings of hearings, are published on the committee's website at:

http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Senate_Estimates/fapacte/estimates/add1516/index

Note on references

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

Committee conclusion

1.13 The committee held an additional hearing for the first time in this Parliament. This additional hearing was required to complete examination of outstanding areas within the PM&C Portfolio. In accordance with procedural order of continuing effect No. 9A, this hearing could have been held on the Friday of the week in which the committee held its estimates hearings. However, the Cross Portfolio Indigenous hearing was scheduled for the Friday of the estimates week in accordance with the

program for estimates hearings agreed by the Senate on 10 November 2015.⁷ Given this constraint, the committee needed to schedule the additional hearing at a later date and 22 February 2016 was agreed.

1.14 As a result of these scheduling issues, the committee has agreed to examine opportunities to consolidate its estimates program.

7 *Journals of the Senate No. 124*, 10 November 2015, p. 3335.