

**AUSTRALIAN SENATE**

**ENVIRONMENT, RECREATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND THE  
ARTS  
LEGISLATION COMMITTEE**

**REPORT ON EXAMINATION OF ESTIMATES**

**JUNE 1997**

## **Committee Membership at 16 JUNE 1997**

### **MEMBERS**

Senator K Patterson, Chair (LP, VIC)  
Senator the Hon C Schacht, Deputy Chair (ALP, SA)  
Senator A Eggleston (LP, WA)  
Senator M Lees (AD, SA)  
Senator K Lundy (ALP, ACT)  
Senator R Lightfoot (LP, WA)

### **SUBSTITUTE MEMBER**

Senator J Tierney (LP, NSW) substituting for Senator Lightfoot on communications and the arts matters

### **PARTICIPATING MEMBERS**

Senator E Abetz (LP, TAS)  
Senator L Allison (AD, VIC)  
Senator the Hon N Bolkus (ALP, SA)  
Senator R Boswell (NPA, QLD)  
Senator R Brown (Aust. Greens, TAS)  
Senator P Calvert (LP, TAS)  
Senator K Carr (ALP, VIC)  
Senator the Hon R Collins (ALP, NT)  
Senator M Colston (IND, QLD)  
Senator H Coonan (LP, NSW)  
Senator B Cooney (ALP, VIC)  
Senator W Crane (LP, WA)  
Senator the Hon J Faulkner (ALP, NSW)  
Senator A Ferguson (LP, SA)  
Senator B Harradine (IND, TAS)  
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Senator S Mackay (ALP, TAS)  
Senator D Margetts (GWA, WA)  
Senator S Murphy (ALP, TAS)  
Senator B Neal (ALP, NSW)  
Senator J Tierney (LP, NSW)  
Senator J Woodley (AD, QLD)

### **SECRETARIAT**

Robert J King, Secretary  
Marina Ellis, Research Officer

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 On 15 May 1997 the Senate referred to this Committee estimates of proposed expenditure for the year ending on 30 June 1998 for the following portfolios:

- Environment, Sport and Territories
- Communications and the Arts

1.2 The Committee held hearings on 5,6,11 and 12 June 1997. The Committee would like to thank the Ministers and officers from the Departments and agencies for their assistance during these hearings.

## 2. GENERAL COMMENTS

### **Conduct of Hearings**

2.1 Appointment times were set for programs and sub-programs, and the Committee successfully completed the examination of all programs in the time allocated. The Committee endeavoured to closely follow the agreed agenda and consequently, written questions were put on notice by Senators to expedite the hearing process. The total hearing time of the Committee (excluding suspensions) was 33 hours.

2.2 Senators were asked to indicate by close of business two days before the hearings which interstate agencies they wished to be heard. This practice avoided agencies incurring unnecessary expense in travelling to Canberra when their officers were not required.

### **Questions on Notice**

2.3 The Committee resolved that responses to questions placed on notice at the hearings be sent to the secretariat up until the close of business on 14 July 1997. The Senators were asked to place all outstanding questions on notice to the Department of Environment, Sport and Territories by 13 June 1997.

2.4 The Committee received advice from the Clerk of the Senate concerning questions put on notice during estimates hearings. The Clerk's advice was based on the principle that questions once lodged were in the possession of the Committee and accordingly it was for the Committee, not any individual Senator, to determine whether questions should be pursued. A Senator who placed questions on notice could subsequently indicate that they did not wish to receive responses to those questions, and it was then a matter for the Committee to decide whether they should be pursued. It was also open to any individual Senator to ask the same questions, whether or not the Senator who originally placed them on notice or the Committee decided to pursue them. If a minister or officers objected to answering the questions according to Privilege Resolution 1(10) the Committee would determine whether the questions should be pressed. The Clerk clarified the fact that a Senator had a right to place questions on notice as well as ask oral questions, and that the committee determined whether questions should be pressed only if and when ministers or officers objected to answering the questions.

## **Telstra**

2.5 The Committee members sought information on JORN (Jindalee Operation Radar Network) which was not given in the Telstra Annual Report. They were referred to half-yearly reports submitted to the Stock Exchange by Telstra. The Committee notes that it had recommended in its September 1995 *Report on the Review of Annual Reports* that half-yearly accounts of Telstra be presented to the Parliament for examination by the Senate. If the Committee's recommendation had been acted upon the Estimates examination process would have been facilitated.

2.6 The presence at the hearings of the Chief Executive Officer of Telstra, Mr Frank Blount, had been requested by a member of the Committee, and other Committee members had prepared questions in the expectation that he would be there. Mr Blount, while expressing appreciation of the invitation, was unable to attend because of prior commitments which required his presence overseas. At a subsequent private meeting, the Committee resolved to request in writing the attendance before it of Mr Frank Blount, Chief Executive Officer of Telstra, at

the supplementary estimates hearings scheduled for August 1997. In the event of Mr Blount's being unable to comply with this request, the Committee would expect him to state the reasons in writing.

2.7 The Committee decided to call Telstra to a further hearing on 24 June 1997 under the Committee's power to examine Annual Reports. The matters to be considered by the Committee at this hearing relate to progress of the COT (Casualties of Telecom) cases.

### 3. TIMETABLE FOR SUPPLEMENTARY HEARINGS

3.1 The Committee has agreed on the following timetable:

Monday 14 July is the last day for departments to provide answers to questions on notice.

The Committee requests the departments to provide as many answers as possible prior to this date;

The last day for members to notify matters to be raised at the supplementary hearing is close of business not less than three working days before the first day fixed for the commencement of the supplementary meetings, i.e. 14 August 1997;

Supplementary hearings will be held on Wednesday, 20 August and Thursday 21 August 1997.

Senator Kay Patterson  
Chair

**APPENDIX A****AGENDA****Senate Environment, Recreation, Communications  
and the Arts Legislation Committee****Estimates Hearing****THURSDAY 5 JUNE 1997****Committee Room - 2S1****3.00pm to 11.00pm****ENVIRONMENT, SPORT AND TERRITORIES PORTFOLIO****3.00pm - 4.00pm - Program 3, Sub-programs 3.1 - 3.8****Meteorology\***

Sub-program	3.1	Monitoring and Prediction*
	3.2	Scientific Development*
	3.3	Weather Services*
	3.4	Climate Services*
	3.5	Consultative Services*
	3.6	Hydrological Services*
	3.7	International Activities*
	3.8	Corporate Activities*

**4.00pm - 5.00pm - Program 1, Sub-program 1.5****Environment\***

Sub-program	1.5	Portfolio Marine*
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**5.00pm - 6.30pm - Program 1, Sub-program 1.1**

Sub program	1.1	Environment Priorities & Coordination
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**6.30pm - 7.30pm - DINNER ADJOURNMENT****7.30 pm - 11.00 pm - Program 1, Sub-program 1.2 - 1.4****Environment**

7.30pm	1.2	Environment Protection
9.00pm	1.3	Australian and World Heritage Commission
10.00pm	1.4	Biodiversity

**11.00pm - ADJOURN**

\*External Agencies - Interstate travel required

## **AGENDA**

### **Senate Environment, Recreation, Communications and the Arts Legislation Committee**

#### **Estimates Hearing**

**FRIDAY 6 JUNE 1997**  
**Committee Room - 2S1**  
**9.00am to 1.00pm**

#### **ENVIRONMENT, SPORT AND TERRITORIES PORTFOLIO**

##### **9.00am - 10.00am - Program 4, Sub-programs 4.1 - 4.3**

##### **Sport and Recreation**

9.00am	4.1	Recreation Development
9.30am	4.2	Australian Sports Commission
10.00am	4.3	Australian Sports Drug Agency

##### **10.30am - 10.45am - MORNING TEA ADJOURNMENT**

##### **10.45am - 12.00 noon - Program 5, Sub-programs 5.1 - 5.6**

##### **Territories and Local Government**

10.45am	5.1	Executive and Coordination
11.00am	5.2	Indian Ocean Territories
11.15am	5.3	Norfolk Island and Other Territories
11.30am	5.4	National Office of Local Government
11.45am	5.5	National Capital Authority

##### **12.00 noon - 1.00pm - Sub-programs 6.1 - 6.2**

##### **Corporate Services**

12.00 Noon	6.1	Executive and Coordination
12.30pm	6.2	Departmental Support Services

##### **1.00pm - ADJOURN**

\* External agencies - interstate travel required



# **AGENDA**

## **Senate Environment, Recreation, Communications and the Arts Legislation Committee Estimates Hearing**

**WEDNESDAY 11 JUNE 1997**  
**Committee Room - 2R3**  
**9.00am to 11.00pm**  
**COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ARTS PORTFOLIO**

**9.00am - 10.00am - Program 2, Sub-programs 2.3, 2.1**

**Film and Intellectual Property**

9.00am	2.3	National Film and Sound Archive
9.30am	2.1	Film and Intellectual Property Policy

**10.00am - 10.15am - MORNING TEA ADJOURNMENT**

10.15am	2.4	Australian Film Finance Corporation (AFFC)*
11.00am	2.6	Australian Film Commission (AFC)*

**11.30am - 3.15pm - Program 3, Sub-program 3.3**

**Broadcasting, Online and Information Services**

10.30am	3.3	Australian Broadcasting Corporation*
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**12.30pm - 1.30pm - LUNCH ADJOURNMENT**

1.30pm	3.3	Australian Broadcasting Corporation*
2.00pm	3.4	Special Broadcasting Service*

**3.15pm - 3.30pm - AFTERNOON TEA ADJOURNMENT**

**3.30pm - 6.30pm - Program 3, Sub-program 3.4, 3.5**

**Broadcasting, Online and Information Services**

3.30pm	3.5	Australian Broadcasting Authority
4.30pm	3.2	National Transmission Agency
5.30pm	3.1	Broadcasting, Online and Information Services

**6.30pm - 7.30pm - DINNER ADJOURNMENT**

**7.30pm - 11.00pm - Program 1, Sub-programs - 1.2, 1.3 and 1.6 - 1.9**

**Arts and Heritage Services**

7.30pm	1.7	National Library of Australia (NLA)
8.00pm	1.6	National Gallery of Australia
9.00pm	1.8	National Museum of Australia
10.00pm	1.2	Australian Archives
10.30pm	1.9	National Science & Technology Centre (NSTC)

**11.00pm ADJOURN**

\* External agencies - interstate travel required

**AGENDA**  
**Senate Environment, Recreation, Communications**  
**and the Arts Legislation Committee**

**Estimates Hearing**

**THURSDAY 12 JUNE 1997**  
**Committee Room - 2R3**  
**9.00am to 7.00pm**

**COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ARTS PORTFOLIO**

**9.00am - 11.45am - Program 1, Sub-programs 1.1, 1.8**  
**Arts and Heritage**

9.00am	1.1	Arts and Heritage Policy
10.00am	1.3	Cultural Development Assistance

**10.30am - 10.45am Morning Tea Adjournment**

10.45am	1.4	Australia Council*
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**11.45am - 1.00pm - Program 4, Sub-program 4.4**  
**Communications**

11.45am	4.4	Australian Communications Authority*
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**1.00 - 2.00 LUNCH ADJOURNMENT**

**2.00pm - 6.00pm - Program 4, Sub-programs 4.1 - 4.3**  
**Communications**

2.00pm	4.2	Australian Postal Corporation*
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**3.15pm AFTERNOON TEA ADJOURNMENT**

3.30pm	4.3	Telstra Corporation Limited (Telstra)*
5.00pm	4.1	Telecommunications and Postal Policy

**6.00pm - 7.00pm Program 5 - Corporate & Executive**

**7.00pm ADJOURNMENT**

\* External agencies - interstate travel required

## APPENDIX B

### Environment, Sport and Territories Portfolio Consideration of Estimates 5 June 1997

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