

Chapter 1

Overview

1.1 On 13 May 2014, the Senate referred the following to the Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee (the committee):

- Particulars of proposed expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2015 [Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2014–15];
- Particulars of certain proposed expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2015 [Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2014–15]; and
- Particulars of certain proposed expenditure in relation to the parliamentary departments in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2015.¹

1.2 Standing legislation committees are required to report to the Senate on 24 June 2014.²

Portfolio coverage

1.3 The committee has responsibility for examining the expenditure and outcomes of the Education and Employment portfolios.³ Appendix 1 lists the department and agencies under this portfolio.

Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS) 2014–15

1.4 The Education and Employment Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS) inform senators of the proposed allocation of funding to government outcomes by agencies within the portfolio.

Hearings

1.5 The committee conducted four days of hearings, examining Employment outcomes and agencies on 2 and 3 June 2014 and Education outcomes and agencies on 4 and 5 June 2014. In total the committee met for 36 hours and 57 minutes, excluding breaks.

1.6 The committee took evidence from Senator the Hon Eric Abetz, Minister for Employment; Senator the Hon Marise Payne, Minister for Human Services, Senator the Hon Scott Ryan, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education, representing the Minister for Education; and officers of the relevant departments and

1 *Journals of the Senate*, No.27, 13 May 2014, p. 778.

2 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 6, 4 December 2013, p. 224.

3 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 1, 12 November 2013, p. 16.

agencies. The committee thanks the Ministers, departmental secretaries and officers for their assistance.

1.7 The following outcomes and agencies appeared before the committee for the Employment Portfolio:

- Fair Work Ombudsman;
- Office of the Fair Work Building Industry Inspectorate (Fair Work Building and Construction);
- Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency;
- Workplace Gender Equality Agency;
- Fair Work Commission;
- Comcare, the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission, and the Seafarers' Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Authority;
- Safe Work Australia; and
- Cross Portfolio and Outcomes 1 and 2.

1.8 The following outcomes and agencies appeared before the committee for the Education Portfolio:

- Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority;
- Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership;
- Australian Research Council;
- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency; and
- Cross Portfolio and Outcomes 1, 2 and 3.

Public interest immunity claims

1.9 On 13 May 2009, the Senate passed an order relating to public interest immunity claims.⁴ The order sets out the processes to be followed if a witness declines to answer a question. The full text of this order has previously been provided to departments and agencies and was incorporated in the Chair's opening statement on each day of the estimates hearing.

Questions on notice

1.10 The committee has drawn the attention of the department and its agencies to the agreed deadline of Friday, 25 July 2014 for the receipt of answers to questions taken on notice from this round, in accordance with Standing Order 26.

4 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 68, 13 May 2009, p. 1941. The order was moved by Senator Cormann.

1.11 Responses to questions on notice and additional information provided to the committee are tabled in the Senate and uploaded to the committee's web page. Links to the *Hansard* transcripts of these public hearings and to answers and additional information will be posted on the committee's website.⁵

Note on Hansard page referencing

1.12 Hansard references throughout this report relate to proof Hansard page numbers. Please note page numbering may differ between the proof and final Hansard.

5 Information will be published at the following website address:
http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Senate_Estimates/eetctte/estimates/bud1415/index