

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

1.1 The Standing Committee on Employment, Workplace Relations and Education presents its report to the Senate.

1.2 On 8 February 2007<sup>1</sup> the Senate referred the following documents to the committee for examination and report in relation to the Employment and Workplace Relations and the Education, Science and Training portfolios:

- Particulars of proposed additional expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2007 [Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2006-2007].
- Particulars of certain proposed additional expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2007 [Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2006-2007].
- Statement of savings expected in annual appropriations made by Act No. 66 of 2006 (*Appropriation Act (No. 1) 2006-2007*) and Act No. 67 of 2006 (*Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2006-2007*).
- The final budget outcome 2005-06 and the Issues from the Advance to the Finance Minister as a final charge for the year ended 30 June 2006.

1.3 Standing committees are required to report to the Senate on 22 March 2007.

### Portfolio coverage

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

- Education, Science and Training portfolio
- Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio

Appendix 1 lists the departments and agencies under the portfolios mentioned above.

### Hearings

1.5 The committee conducted two days of hearings, examining the Education, Science and Training portfolio on 14 February 2007 and the Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio on 15 February 2007. In total the committee met for 20 hours and 43 minutes, excluding breaks. The committee took into account the

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1 Senator Ian Campbell, *Senate Hansard*, No. 129, 8 February 2007, p. 3414

Additional Estimates Portfolio Statements 2006-2007 provided by the departments and also annual reports for 2005-2006.

1.6 The following agencies and groups were released from the hearings without examination: Indigenous and Transitions Group, Strategic Analysis and Evaluation Group, International Education Group and the Australian Industrial Relations Commission/Australian Industrial Registry (AIRC/AIR).

1.7 Appendix 2 of this report lists the table of contents of the Hansard transcripts. These transcripts are available on either the committee's homepage under estimates on the Hansard website: <http://www.aph.gov.au/hansard/senate/commtee/comsen.asp>

### **Questions on notice**

1.8 The committee draws the attention of the departments and agencies to the agreed deadline of Friday, 30 March 2007 for the receipt of answers to questions taken on notice from this round, in accordance with Standing Order 26.

1.9 During the hearings, the committee commented on the inadequate performance of both departments in answering the questions placed on notice during the previous round. The committee expects the performance of both portfolios to improve for the forthcoming 2007-2008 estimates rounds.

1.10 For this round, written questions on notice were received from Senators Carr, Crossin, Ludwig, Marshall, Nettle and Wong.

1.11 A statistical summary of questions taken on notice is attached at Appendix 4 of this report.