

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 On 9 May 2006, the Senate referred to the committee the following documents for examination and report in relation to the Transport and Regional Services portfolio and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio:

- Particulars of certain proposed expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2007;
- Particulars of proposed expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2007;
- Particulars of certain proposed supplementary expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2006; and
- Particulars of proposed supplementary expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2006.¹

1.2 The committee was required to report to the Senate on 20 June 2006.²

1.3 The committee considered the Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS) 2006-2007 for the two portfolios at hearings on 22, 23, 24 and 25 May 2006. The hearings were conducted in accordance with the agreed agenda as follows:

- Monday 22 May – Transport and Regional Services portfolio;
- Tuesday 23 May – Transport and Regional Services portfolio;
- Wednesday 24 May – Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio;
- Thursday 25 May – Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio.

1.4 The committee heard evidence from Senator the Hon Ian Campbell, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, representing the Minister for Transport and Regional Services and the Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads and from Senator the Hon Eric Abetz, Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation representing the Minister for Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry. Evidence was also provided by Mr Mike Mrdak, Acting Secretary of the Department of Transport and Regional Services, Ms Joanna Hewitt, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture,

1 Senate Journal No. 80, 'Particulars of Proposed Expenditure for 2006-07 and Particulars of Proposed Supplementary Expenditure for 2005-06 – Documents – Reference of Estimates to Legislation Committees', 9 May 2006, p. 2133

2 Senate Journal No. 80, 'Particulars of Proposed Expenditure for 2006-07 and Particulars of Proposed Supplementary Expenditure for 2005-06 – Documents – Reference of Estimates to Legislation Committees', 9 May 2006, p. 2133

Fisheries and Forestry, and officers representing the departments and agencies covered by the estimates before the committee.

1.5 The committee thanks the ministers, departmental secretaries and officers for their assistance and cooperation during the hearings.

Questions on Notice

1.6 In accordance with Standing Order 26, the committee is required to set a date for the lodgement of written answers and additional information. The committee requested that written answers and additional information be submitted by Thursday 13 July 2006.

Administration of written answers and additional information

1.7 Answers to questions taken on notice at the budget estimates hearings will be tabled in the Senate in separate volumes entitled 'Additional information provided during the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee's examination of budget estimates 2006-2007'. Documents not suitable for inclusion in the additional information volumes will be available on request from the committee secretariat.

1.8 Answers to questions on notice received from the departments will also be posted onto the committee's website at a later date.