

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 On 8 February 2007, the Senate referred the following documents to the Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport (the committee) for examination and report in relation to the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio and the Transport and Regional Services portfolio:

- 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*);
- Final budget outcome 2005-06; and
- Issues from the Advance to the Finance Minister as a final charge for the year ended 30 June 2006.¹

1.2 The committee was required to report to the Senate on 21 March 2007.²

1.3 The committee considered the Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements 2006-2007 for each portfolio at hearings on 14, 15 and 16 February 2007. The hearings were conducted in accordance with the agreed agenda as follows:

- Wednesday, 14 February 2007 – Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio;
- Thursday, 15 February 2007 – Transport and Regional Services portfolio;
- Friday, 16 February 2007 – Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio.

1.4 The committee heard evidence from Senator the Hon Eric Abetz, Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation, representing the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and Senator the Hon Ian Campbell, Minister for Human Services, representing the Minister for Transport and Regional Services. Evidence was also provided by Dr Cliff Samson, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Mr Mike Taylor, Secretary of the Department of Transport and

1 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 126, 'Days of Meeting-Committees-Estimates Hearings', entry no. 19, 7 December 2007, pp 3292-3293.

2 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 129, 'Particulars of Proposed Additional Expenditure 2006-07- Documents', entry no. 26, 8 February 2007, p. 3414.

Regional Services, 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, 5 April 2007.

Additional information

1.7 Answers to questions taken on notice at the additional estimates hearings will be tabled in the Senate in separate volumes entitled 'Additional information relating to the examination of additional estimates 2006-2007-Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport'. 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 on the committee's website at a later date.