



Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2018-19
Tuesday, 23 October 2018
Daily summary

Here is the summary of today's proceedings in the Environment and Communications Legislation Committee estimates hearing.

The committee met from 9.00am until 10.09pm.

The committee called:

- Department and agencies of the Communications and the Arts portfolio, including the Department of Communications and the Arts, Australian Postal Corporation, Australian Communications and Media Authority, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Special Broadcasting Service Corporation, Office of the eSafety Commissioner and NBN Co Limited.

Topics discussed by the committee included:

- Government's changes to cross-media ownership laws in 2017;
- proposal to move the Australian embassy to Jerusalem;
- conduct of the Department of Communications and the Arts (the Department) inquiry into potential interference at the ABC;
- \$30 million taxpayer grant to Fox Sports for coverage of women's and niche sports;
- disagreement between Australia Post and ANZ Bank over higher fees to fund the cost of providing banking services;
- growth in Australia Post's inbound parcel volumes from Asia;
- Australia Post's strategy to improve the viability of licensed post offices;
- compliance of Sky News free-to-air programs with the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice;
- merger of Fairfax Media and Nine Entertainment;
- Government's review into the effectiveness of the *Enhancing Online Safety Act 2015* and the Online Content Scheme;
- update on the operation of the Regional and Small Publishers Innovation Fund;
- potential write-down of the value of the National Broadband Network;
- update on the progress of the Department's USO Taskforce;
- status of the tender request for the delivery of the National Relay Service;
- ABC's handling of the dismissal of former ABC Managing Director, Ms Michelle Guthrie;
- freeze in the ABC's annual funding indexation for three years from July 2019;
- appointment process for the next chair of the ABC Board;
- SBS's participation in the Government's Competitive Neutrality Review;
- Office of the eSafety Commissioner's targeting of programs to assist vulnerable groups;
- concerns about how privatisation plans for NBN Co are progressing; and
- assumptions that underpin NBN Co's 2019–2022 corporate plan.