

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### Background

1.1 The Fuel Tax Bill 2006 and the Fuel Tax (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2006 were introduced into the House of Representatives on 29 March 2006 by the Minister for Revenue and Assistant Treasurer, the Hon. Peter Dutton MP.

1.2 On 11 May 2006, on the recommendation of the Senate Standing Committee for the Selection of Bills, the Senate referred the provisions of the Bills to the Economics Legislation Committee for inquiry and report by 7 June 2006<sup>1</sup>.

1.3 An interim report was tabled out of session on 7 June 2006.

### Conduct of the Inquiry

1.4 The Committee advertised the inquiry nationally and posted details on its internet site. In addition, it wrote to a number of organisations advising them of the inquiry and inviting them to make submissions.

1.5 The Committee received 35 submissions to its inquiry. These are listed at Appendix 1. The Committee also received a number of papers that were tabled during the hearing; and supplementary correspondence sent after the hearing. These documents are tabled with this report and form part of the Committee's record.

1.6 The Committee held a public hearing at Parliament House in Canberra on Monday, 5 June 2006. Witnesses who presented evidence at the hearing are listed in Appendix 2.

1.7 The Hansard of the Committee's hearing and copies of all submissions are tabled with this report. These documents, plus the Committee's report, are also available on the Committee's website at [http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/economics\\_ctte/fuel\\_1/index.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/economics_ctte/fuel_1/index.htm)

### The Committee's Inquiry

1.8 While these Bills have been under development and consultation for some time, and the policy principles were announced in a series of announcements dating back several years, their passage through the parliament has been rapid for such important, complex and far reaching legislation. The provisions of the Bills were

---

1 Selection of Bills Committee, *Report No. 4 of 2006*.

referred to the Committee by the Senate on 11 May, while still in the House of Representatives at the second reading stage.

1.9 The provisions of the Bills were referred to the Committee on the last sitting day before the commencement of the consideration of the Budget Estimates by this and the other legislation committees. This process fully occupies most senators, and certainly all members of this Committee, for the full period of the Estimates hearings. Accordingly, the first opportunity available for the Committee to conduct a hearing on the Bills was 5 June.

1.10 The Committee was set 7 June as its reporting date, allowing no time to either draft a report or consider the evidence. The Committee therefore resolved that it would not table its report until Tuesday 13 June, subsequently extended until 14 June, a date which it has only been able to meet with great difficulty.

1.11 Submissions and witnesses have raised several concerns about the Bills that the Committee has not been able to resolve to its satisfaction because of the truncated nature of the inquiry it was required to conduct.

1.12 The Committee thanks those who participated at this inquiry.