

Chapter 1

Referral

1.1 On 25 June 2014, the Senate resolved to establish the Select Committee into the Abbott Government's Budget Cuts. The committee was established to inquire into the effect of cuts or changes in the Commonwealth budget and provide a final report to the Senate on or before 20 June 2016, with particular reference to:

- a) any reductions in access to services provided by the Commonwealth;
- b) the provision of other services, programs or benefits provided by the Government affected by the budget;
- c) Commonwealth-state relations and the impact of decreased Commonwealth investment on service delivery by the states;
- d) the fairness and efficiency of revenue raising;
- e) the structural budget balance over the forward estimates and the next 10 years;
- f) the reduced investment in scientific research and infrastructure and its impact on future productivity;
- g) public sector job cuts;
- h) the impact of the budget on retirement incomes and pensions;
- i) intergenerational mobility;
- j) the impact of the budget on young people and students;
- k) the impact of the budget on households; and
- l) other matters the committee considers relevant.¹

Committee name change

1.2 On 11 August 2015, the Senate agreed to change the name of the committee to the Senate Select Committee into the Scrutiny of Government Budget Measures to more accurately reflect the ongoing work of the committee.²

Area of inquiry for this report

1.3 As per Terms of Reference f and l, the committee agreed to investigate the proposed organisational restructure and resulting job losses in the climate research areas at the CSIRO. Job losses were announced by the current CSIRO Chief Executive Dr Larry Marshall on 4 February 2016.³

1 *Journals of the Senate No. 36—25 June 2014, pp 1000-1001.*

2 *Journals of the Senate No. 104—11 August 2015, p. 2900.*

3 Dr Larry Marshall, staff email, accessed via <http://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/climate-will-be-all-gone-as-csiro-swings-jobs-axe-scientists-say-20160203-gml7jy.html> (accessed on 15 March 2016)

Conduct of the inquiry

1.4 The committee directly contacted a number of relevant organisations and individuals to notify them of the inquiry and to invite submissions. A list of all submissions received by the committee is available at Appendix 1.

1.5 In relation to this inquiry, the committee held public hearings in: Hobart on 8 March, Melbourne on 11 March, Canberra on 7 April and 27 April 2016. Relevant submissions and the Hansard transcripts of evidence from public hearings can be accessed online through the committee's website.

Acknowledgements

1.6 The committee thanks all the individuals and organisations that made submissions to this inquiry and appeared at the public hearings.