

Chapter 1

Budget Estimates 2019–20

Introduction

1.1 On 2 April 2019, the Senate referred the following to the Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee (the committee):

- Particulars of proposed expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2020 [Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2019–20];
- Particulars of certain proposed expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2020 [Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2019–20]; and
- Particulars of proposed expenditure in relation to the parliamentary departments in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2020 [Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Bill (No. 1) 2019–20].¹

1.2 A reporting date of 14 May 2019 was set for the committee's report to the Senate on its consideration of the 2019–20 Budget Estimates.²

Portfolio coverage

1.3 The committee has responsibility for examining the expenditure and outcomes of the following portfolios:

- Environment and Energy; and
- Communications and the Arts.³

Hearings

1.4 The committee examined both the Environment and Energy and the Communications and the Arts portfolios at the hearing on Thursday, 4 April 2019. Two further hearings for the Environment and Energy portfolio and the Communications and the Arts portfolio took place on Monday, 8 April 2019 and Tuesday, 9 April 2019 respectively.

1.5 The committee heard evidence from Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham, Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, representing the Minister for the Environment and Minister for Energy; Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie, Minister for Regional Services, Sport, Local Government and Decentralisation, representing the Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Energy; Senator the

1 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 141, 2 April 2019, p. 4815.

2 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 133, 29 November 2018, p. 4329.

3 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 2, 31 August 2016, pp. 75–76.

Hon Mitch Fifield, Minister for Communications and the Arts; Senator the Hon Anne Ruston, Assistant Minister for International Development and the Pacific, representing the Minister for the Environment and Minister for Energy and Senator the Hon Zed Seselja, Assistant Minister for Treasury and Finance, representing the Minister for the Environment and Minister for Energy, together with officers from the relevant departments and agencies. The committee thanks the Ministers, departmental secretaries and officers who appeared before it.

1.6 The following portfolio agencies were not required to appear:

Environment and Energy portfolio

- Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder; and
- Sydney Harbour Federation Trust.

Communications and the Arts portfolio

- Australia Business Arts Foundation Ltd (Creative Partnerships Australia);
- Australia Council for the Arts;
- Australian Film, Television and Radio School;
- Australian National Maritime Museum;
- Bundanon Trust;
- Classification Board;
- Classification Review Board;
- National Film and Sound Archive of Australia;
- National Gallery of Australia;
- National Library of Australia;
- National Museum of Australia;
- National Portrait Gallery of Australia; and
- Old Parliament House.

Questions on notice and Hansard transcripts

1.7 In accordance with standing order 26(9)(a), the committee set Friday, 24 May 2019 as the date for the return of written answers or additional information for the hearings held on 4 April, 8 April and 9 April 2019.

1.8 Written answers and information provided to the committee in response to questions on notice arising from the hearings are tabled in the Senate and posted on the committee's website. Links to the transcripts of these public hearings and to answers and additional information are available on the internet at: www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Senate_Estimates/ec.

Additional Estimates 2018–19 – timeliness of answers to questions on notice

1.9 The committee's hearing for the Environment and Energy portfolio for Additional Estimates 2018–19 took place on 18 February 2019 and its hearing for the Communications and the Arts portfolio was held on 19 February 2019. The committee held a further hearing on 6 March 2019 in order to undertake its examination of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

1.10 The committee received answers to 276 of the 289 questions taken on notice for the Environment and Energy portfolio from the hearing held on 18 February 2019 by the due date of 29 March 2019. The Communications and the Arts portfolio provided answers to 55 of the 137 questions taken on notice from the hearings held on 19 February 2019 and 6 March 2019 by the due date of 29 March 2019.

Record of proceedings

1.11 This report does not attempt to analyse the evidence presented during the hearings. However, it does provide a brief list of some of the key issues that were canvassed by the committee for each portfolio.

Note on references and additional information

1.12 References to the *Hansard* transcript are to the proof *Hansard*; page numbers may vary between the proof and official *Hansard* transcript.

1.13 Copies of the *Hansard* transcripts, documents tabled at the hearings, and additional information received after the hearings are tabled in the Senate and available on the committee's website.

