Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee
Budget Estimates 2017-18
Tuesday, 30 May 2017
Daily summary

Here is a summary of today's proceedings in the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee Budget Estimates.

The committee met from 9.00 am to 10.50 pm.

The committee called agencies of the Defence portfolio, including:

- Department of Defence;
- Defence Housing Australia;
- Australian War Memorial; and
- Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Areas of interest covered today included:

Department of Defence (Defence)

- MRH90 helicopter and its compatibility with the Canberra Class Amphibious Assault Ship;
- issues experienced by the New Zealand helicopter NH90 and its similarity to Australia's MRH90 helicopter;
- issues with the Eurocopter Tiger armed reconnaissance helicopter as identified in the Australian National Audit Office's report;
- benefit of conducting Exercise Kowari;
- increased participation of women in Indonesian military forces;
- engagement of Australian industry in Defence estate and infrastructure projects;
- upgrades to Defence's fleet of civilian vehicles; and
- concerns regarding the Naval Shipbuilding Plan.

Defence Housing Australia (DHA)

- possibility of privatising DHA;
- cost of upgrades program; and
- evaluation of previously contaminated sites.

Australian War Memorial

- unveiling of Boer War Memorial on Thursday 1 June.

Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA)

- transitional issues for members moving from Defence to DVA;
- progress of Information Communication and Technology reforms towards veteran-centric services;
- Repatriation Medical Authority's change to Statements of Principles;
- improvement of claims processing;
- progress of suicide prevention trial in Townsville; and
- rehabilitation providers in the Northern Territory.

The committee will next meet at 9.00am, Thursday, 1 June 2017 in the Main Committee Room, calling the department and agencies of the Foreign Affairs and Trade portfolio commencing with the department.