

Chapter 1

Additional Budget Estimates 2019–20

Reference

1.1 On 13 February 2020, the Senate referred the following to the Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee (the committee) for examination and report:

- particulars of proposed additional expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2020 [Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2019–20];
- particulars of certain proposed additional expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2020 [Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2019–20]; and
- Final Budget Outcome 2018–19.

Portfolio coverage

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

- Parliamentary Departments;¹
- Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) Portfolio;
- Finance Portfolio;² and
- Cross Portfolio Indigenous Matters.³

1.3 Departments and agencies under the committee's oversight are listed in Appendix 1 of this report.

Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements 2019–20

1.4 The Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements (PAES) facilitate an understanding of the proposed appropriations in Appropriation Bills (No. 3 and No. 4). The PAES explain changes in resourcing since the Budget and provide information on new measures and their impact on the financial and non-financial

1 As a matter of comity between the Houses neither House inquires into the operations of the other House. For this reason, neither the annual report of, nor the proposed expenditure for, the Department of the House of Representatives is referred to a Senate committee for review.

2 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 2, 31 August 2016, pp. 75–76; Amended on 12 February 2018 (*Journals of the Senate*, No. 84, 12 February 2018, p. 2688), 15 February 2018 (*Journals of the Senate*, No. 87, 15 February 2018, p. 2740–2741) and 17 September 2018 (*Journals of the Senate*, No. 118, 17 September 2018, pp. 3770–3771).

3 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 22, 26 August 2008, p. 683.

planned performance of agencies.⁴ The PAES 2019–20 for the PM&C Portfolio and the Finance Portfolio were tabled in the Senate on 13 February 2020.⁵

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

1.5 The PAES 2019–20 for the PM&C Portfolio note the entities receiving additional appropriation in Appropriation Bills (No. 3 and No. 4), which include the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet; Australian Public Service Commission; National Drought and North Queensland Flood Response and Recovery Agency; National Indigenous Australians Agency; Office of National Intelligence; and the Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General.⁶

1.6 The following changes have been made to the PM&C Portfolio since the 2019–20 Budget:

- responsibility for the Digital Transformation Agency was transferred from the PM&C Portfolio to Services Australia in accordance with amendments to the Administrative Arrangements Order (AAO)⁷ made on 29 May 2019;
- responsibility for Old Parliament House was transferred to the PM&C Portfolio from the Communications and the Arts Portfolio following a decision from the Prime Minister;
- drought functions were delegated to the National Drought and North Queensland Flood Response and Recovery Agency; and
- the National Bushfire Recovery Agency was established within the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.⁸

1.7 Further amendments to the AAO on 5 December 2019 did not result in any changes for the portfolios for which the committee has oversight.

Finance Portfolio

1.8 The PAES 2019–20 for the Finance Portfolio note the additional estimates and variations sought by the Department of Finance, the Australian Electoral Commission and the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority.⁹ The PAES also

4 Budget 2019–20, *Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements*, <https://budget.gov.au/2019-20/content/paes/index.htm> (accessed 10 March 2020).

5 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 42, 13 February 2020, p. 1284.

6 Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements 2019–20, *Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio*, p. 13.

7 The Administrative Arrangements Order is an instrument issued by the Governor-General that formally establishes matters dealt with by each Department of State and the legislation for which the Minister of State administering is responsible.

8 Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements 2019–20, *Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio*, p. 13.

9 Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements 2019–20, *Finance Portfolio*, p. 4.

listed the responsibilities of the Minister for Finance and the Assistant Minister for Finance, Charities and Electoral Matters.¹⁰

Hearings

1.9 The committee held public hearings on 2, 3 and 6 March 2020. The Parliamentary Departments and the PM&C Portfolio (excluding Indigenous matters) were examined on 2 March 2020, the Finance Portfolio was examined on 3 March 2020 and the Cross Portfolio Indigenous Matters was examined on 6 March 2020.

1.10 The committee took evidence from the President of the Senate, Senator the Hon Scott Ryan, and the following Ministers accompanied by officers of relevant departments and agencies:

- Senator the Hon Mathias Cormann, Minister for Finance and Minister representing the Prime Minister;
- Senator the Hon Zed Seselja, Assistant Minister Finance, Charities and Electoral Matters;
- Senator the Hon Marise Payne, Minister for Women; and
- Senator the Hon Anne Ruston, Minister representing the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Minister for Families and Social Services.

1.11 The committee expresses its appreciation for the assistance of the President, Ministers and the officers who appeared.

1.12 Over the course of the hearings, the committee took evidence from the following departments, agencies and statutory officers:

Parliamentary departments

- Department of the Senate;
- Parliamentary Budget Office; and
- Department of Parliamentary Services.

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (Outcome 1);
- National Bushfire Recovery Agency;
- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (Office for Women);
- Workplace Gender Equality Agency;
- National Drought and North Queensland Flood Response and Recovery Agency;
- Australian National Audit Office;
- Australian Public Service Commission; and

10 Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements 2019–20, *Finance Portfolio*, pp. 4–5.

- Office of National Intelligence.

Finance Portfolio

- ASC Pty Ltd;
- Australian Naval Infrastructure Pty Ltd;
- Future Fund Management Agency;
- Department of Finance;
- Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority; and
- Australian Electoral Commission.

Cross Portfolio Indigenous Matters

- Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation;
- Australian Institute of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Studies;
- Indigenous Business Australia;
- National Indigenous Australians Agency; and
- Department of Health (in relation to Indigenous health issues).

1.13 Documents tabled during the hearings of Additional Budget Estimates 2019–20 are listed in Appendix 2 of this report.

Questions on notice and Hansard transcripts

1.14 The committee set 17 April 2020 as the date for the return of answers to questions on notice arising from the Additional Estimates 2019–20 hearings.

1.15 Proof Hansard transcripts of proceedings of hearings are published on the committee's [website](#).

Answers to questions on notice—Supplementary Budget Estimates 2019–20

1.16 The committee's examination of the Supplementary Estimates 2019–20 took place on 21 October 2019 for the Parliamentary Departments and the PM&C Portfolio, 22 October 2019 for the Finance Portfolio and 25 October 2019 for Cross Portfolio Indigenous Matters. The committee set 6 December 2019 as the date for the return of answers to questions on notice.

1.17 The committee held two spillover hearings. The committee heard from the PM&C Portfolio, the Finance Portfolio and the Parliamentary Departments on 14 November 2019 and the PM&C Portfolio again on 26 November 2019. The committee set 19 December 2019 as the date for the return of answers to questions on notice.

Timeliness of answers to questions on notice

1.18 The committee placed a total of 1599 questions on notice during Supplementary Budget Estimates 2019–20.¹¹ Of the 1505 questions taken on notice at the committee's hearings on 21, 22 and 25 October 2019, 845 answers were received by the due date of 6 December 2019. Of the 94 questions taken on notice at the committee's spillover hearings on 14 and 26 November 2019, 67 answers were received by the due date of 19 December 2019.

1.19 The Parliamentary Departments took a total of 219 questions on notice during hearings for Supplementary Budget Estimates 2019–20. 144 answers to 148 questions taken on notice at the committee's hearing on 21 October 2019 were provided by the due date of 6 December 2019. The departments provided a further 60 answers to 71 questions taken on notice at the committee's spillover hearing on 14 November 2019 by the due date of 19 December 2019. The remaining 15 answers were provided by 28 January 2020.

1.20 The Finance Portfolio took 247 number of questions on notice at the committee's hearing on 22 October 2019. 128 answers to questions on notice were provided by 6 December 2019, with the remaining 32 answers provided by 20 December 2020. All 87 answers due by 13 January 2020 were provided on time. Finance did not take any questions on notice at the committee's spillover hearing on 14 November 2019.

1.21 The PM&C Portfolio (including Cross Portfolio on Indigenous Matters) took a total of 1129 questions on notice during hearings for Supplementary Budget Estimates 2019–20. The PM&C Portfolio provided 569 of its 1106 answers to questions on notice at hearings on 21 and 25 October 2019 by the due date of 6 December 2019. This figure includes four questions taken on notice by the Department of Health. 23 questions were taken on notice at the committee's spillover hearings on 14 and 26 November 2019, with 7 answers being provided by the due date of 19 December 2019. 533 answers to questions on notice were provided between late December 2019 and early March 2020. As at the time of tabling for this report, there are 20 answers to questions on notice outstanding.¹²

1.22 The committee highlights its preference for outstanding responses to be provided before the next estimates round.

11 This figure includes both questions taken during the hearings for Supplementary Budget Estimates 2019–20, and written questions on notice provided by Senators after the hearing.

12 As at 18 March 2020.

