

Chapter 1

Budget estimates 2018–19

1.1 On 8 May 2018, the Senate agreed that particulars of the proposed expenditure, in respect to the year ending 30 June 2019, be referred to legislation committees considering the estimates.¹

1.2 The Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee (committee) held public hearings from 29 May 2018 to 1 June 2018 to consider the proposed expenditure for the Health Portfolio, Social Services Portfolio and Human Services Portfolio.² The committee held an additional hearing on 27 June 2018 to further consider particulars of the Health Portfolio.

1.3 The Senate granted the committee an extension of time to report from 26 June 2018 to 13 July 2018.³

Referral of documents

1.4 The Senate referred the following documents to the committee with respect to the 2018–19 Budget estimates:

Particulars of proposed and certain expenditure for 2018–19

- Particulars of proposed expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2019;
- Particulars of proposed expenditure in relation to the parliamentary departments in respect of the year ending 30 June 2019;⁴ and
- Particulars of certain proposed expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2019.⁵

Particulars of proposed and certain additional expenditure for 2017–18

- Particulars of the proposed additional expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2018; and
- Particulars of certain proposed additional expenditure in respect of the year ending 30 June 2018.⁶

1 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 95, 8 May 2018, pp. 3032–3033.

2 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 70, 15 November 2017, pp. 2227–2228.

3 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 102, 25 June 2018, p. 3271.

4 The Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee has responsibility for examining the proposed expenditure for the: Department of the Senate; Department of the House of Representatives; Department of Parliamentary Services and the Parliamentary Budget Office.

5 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 95, 8 May 2018, pp. 3032–3033.

6 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 95, 8 May 2018, pp. 3032–3033.

Portfolio coverage

1.5 The Senate has allocated to the committee the departments and agencies of the:

- Health Portfolio;
- Social Services Portfolio; and
- Human Services Portfolio.⁷

Hearings

Health Portfolio

1.6 The committee considered outcomes of the Health Portfolio at public hearings on 29 May 2018 and 30 May 2018, as follows:

- Whole of portfolio / Corporate matters;
- Outcome 1: Health System Policy, Design and Innovation;
- Outcome 2: Health Access and Support Services;
- Outcome 3: Sport and Recreation;
- Outcome 4: Individual Health Benefits;
- Outcome 5: Regulation, Safety and Protection; and
- Outcome 6: Ageing and Aged Care.

1.7 Entities of the Health Portfolio which appeared at the committee's hearings are listed at Appendix 1.

1.8 On 1 June 2018, Senators Watt, Singh and Siewert notified the committee Chair of a requirement for the committee to meet to further consider aspects of the Health Portfolio.⁸ The committee held an additional public hearing for that purpose on 27 June 2018.

1.9 Evidence was provided by Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie, as Minister for Sport, Minister for Rural Health and Minister representing the Minister for Health. Evidence was also provided by the Secretary of the Department of Health (DOH), Ms Glenys Beauchamp PSM, and other senior officers of DOH and agencies of the Health Portfolio.

Social Services Portfolio

1.10 The committee considered outcomes of the Social Services Portfolio, and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) at public hearings on 31 May 2018 and 1 June 2018, as follows:

7 See *Journals of the Senate*, No. 2, 31 August 2016, pp. 75–76, *Journals of the Senate*, No. 84, 12 February 2018, and *Journals of the Senate* No. 87, 15 February 2018, p. 2740.

8 Notice of this requirement was provided in accordance with Senate Procedural Order of Continuing Effect 9B.

31 May 2018

- Whole of portfolio / Corporate matters; and
- Outcome 1: Social Security.

1 June 2018

- Outcome 3: Disability and Carers;
- National Disability Insurance Agency;
- Outcome 4: Housing; and
- Outcome 2: Families and Communities.

1.11 Evidence was provided by Senator the Hon Zed Seselja, representing the Minister for Social Services. Evidence was also provided by the Secretary of the Department of Social Services, Ms Kathryn Campbell CSC, the Chief Executive Officer of the NDIA, Mr Robert De Luca, alongside other senior officers of those entities.

Human Services Portfolio

1.12 The committee considered the Human Services Portfolio during the latter half of its public hearing of 31 May 2018.

1.13 Evidence was provided by Senator the Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, representing the Minister for Human Services. Evidence was also provided by the Secretary of the Department of Human Services (DHS), Ms Renée Leon PSM, and other senior officers of DHS.

1.14 The committee expresses its appreciation to the ministers and officers who provided evidence to the committee. The committee particularly notes assistance provided by Mr James Downie, Chief Executive Officer of the Independent Hospital Pricing Authority, who provided evidence to the committee via teleconference whilst overseas on personal leave.

Procedural matters

1.15 During its 2018–19 Budget estimates hearings, the committee heard comments from witnesses indicating that the scope of their evidence was potentially limited by a preference not to disclose advice provided to government. The committee reaffirms the Chair's advice to witnesses, provided at the commencement of each portfolio's appearance at the hearings:

Witnesses are specifically reminded that a statement that information or a document is confidential or consists of advice to government is not a statement that meets the requirements of the [order of the Senate of 13 May 2009 regarding public interest immunity claims]. Instead witnesses are required to provide some specific indication of the harm to the public

interest that could result from the disclosure of the information or the document.⁹

Questions on notice

1.16 In accordance with Senate Standing Order 26(9)(a), the committee set 16 July 2018 as the due date for the return of answers to questions on notice arising from its hearings on 29 May 2018 to 1 June 2018. The committee set 8 August 2018 as the due date for the return of answers to questions taken on notice arising from its additional hearing on 27 June 2018.

1.17 On receipt, answers to questions on notice are published on the committee's estimates webpage.¹⁰

Timeliness of answers from the 2017–18 Additional estimates

1.18 The committee notes answers to questions on notice from the 2017–18 Additional estimates, which were due by 20 April 2018, were returned as follows:

- Health Portfolio—of the 382 questions taken on notice: 210 answers were provided on time; 172 answers were provided late; and nine of those late answers were provided just one day prior to the Health Portfolio's appearance at the 2018–19 Budget estimates;
- Social Services Portfolio—answers to all 240 questions taken on notice were provided on time; and
- Human Services Portfolio—of the 54 questions taken on notice: 32 answers were provided on time; 22 answers were provided late; and four of those late answers were provided just one day prior to the Human Services Portfolio's appearance the 2018–19 Budget estimates.

Hansard transcripts

1.19 A verbatim record of the committee's hearings is made via the *Committee Hansard*.¹¹ The *Committee Hansard* is published on the estimates webpage.

1.20 References in this report are to the proof *Committee Hansard*. Pages numbers may vary between the proof and the final versions of the *Committee Hansard*.

9 See *Proof Committee Hansard*, 29 May 2018, p. 4, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 31 May 2018, p. 4, and *Proof Committee Hansard*, 27 June 2018, p. 3.

10 Accessible via https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Senate_Estimates/ca.

11 The *Committee Hansard* is published online at https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Senate_Estimates/ca/2018-2019_Budget_estimates.