



Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee  
Additional Estimates 2024-25  
Monday, 24 February 2025  
Daily summary

The committee met from 9.01am until 10.22pm.

The committee called the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water portfolio, discussing the following topics:

Corporate matters and general questions

- Staffing costs and shared services costs;
- AI use and assurance policies;
- Environmental Defender's Office annual report, financial statements and deed of agreement with the department; and
- Norton Rose Fulbright audit of the Environmental Defender's Office.

Program 1.1—greenhouse gas emission policy

- Information on greenhouse gas emissions produced by various EPBC projects;
- Approvals of gas and coal mine expansions;
- Safeguard mechanism coverage and carbon leakage;
- Progress against 2030 emissions target; emissions reductions against 2005 levels; and
- Integrated Farm and Land Management method, consultation process and scope.

Emissions Reduction Assurance Committee

- Integrity of the Australian Carbon Credit Unit scheme.

Program 1.2—energy policy

- Effectiveness of the Integrated System Plan (ISP);
- Costs over the lifetime of projects under the Capacity Investment Scheme;
- Progress against the 82% renewables target;
- Scope of Frontier Economics report's modelling of a nuclear industry in Australia;
- Energy planning processes and gas market systems;
- Timelines for delivering nuclear energy; and
- The importance of gas in Australia's energy mix.

Australian Renewable Energy Agency

- Changes to the ARENA Act;
- Community batteries for the Household Solar program;
- Community electrification programs; and
- National Roadmap for Bidirectional EV Charging.

### Clean Energy Finance Corporation

- Funding allocations for various projects – Rewiring the Nation, Community Batteries for Household Solar program, Household Energy Upgrades Fund, Capacity Investment Scheme, Powering Australia Technology Fund; and
- Transmission projects under the Rewiring the Nation scheme.

### Snowy Hydro Limited

- Water use in the Snowy Hydro 2.0 project;
- Hydrogen power generation in conjunction with the Kurri Kurri gas project; and
- Snowy Hydro's costing of tunnel boring machine number 4.

### Climate Change Authority

- Media release by CCA on additional carbon emissions resulting from a future nuclear rollout;
- Basis for CCA advice regarding climate reductions targets for 2035; and
- Effect of United States policy on CCA work.

### Australian Energy Regulator

- Trends in numbers of hardship customers of Australian energy retailers;
- Timeline to develop a regulatory framework for nuclear energy; and
- AER commentary on higher energy prices connected to degrading coal plant reliability.

### Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner

- Abilities of the Commissioner regarding navigating regulation and rules; and
- Scope of the Commissioner to consult and speak regarding energy infrastructure affecting individuals, such as farmers.

### Program 2.1—biodiversity policy

- Nature positive law reform, including agreements between the Commonwealth and salmon industry in Tasmania;
- Oxygenation trial in Macquarie Harbour;
- DCCEE's role in drafting nature positive legislation through the Office of Parliamentary Counsel;
- Environmental Defenders Office - review of conduct under the grant agreement by DCCEE and referral to the NT Law Society;
- Department efforts to improve timeliness of environmental approval assessments;
- Scientific advice from the Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Coal Seam Gas and Large Coal Mining Development regarding the proposed gas industry in the Beetaloo Basin;
- Proposed expansion of Woodside's north-west shelf project;
- EPBC listing of the White Ash forests of south-east Australia;
- Woodside's proposed Browse Basin gas wells and carbon capture and storage;
- Walker Corporation's new proposed residential development on Toondah Harbour;
- Caloundra Transport Corridor Upgrade project;

- Ballymore Resources proposed gold mine in the Whitsundays;
- Fox Resources proposed gold mine near Bundaberg;
- Western Australian Gas and Downstream Opportunities study by ACIL Allen;
- Status of Environment Information Australia; and
- Breakdown of expenses for the Biodiversity Convention COP16.

#### Program 2.2—heritage policy

- Costs of external legal advice regarding the section 10 declaration for the proposed McPhillamy's gold mine; and
- Assessment of the pecuniary or proprietary impact to an applicant for a section 10 declaration.

#### Bureau of Meteorology

- ANAO report into Bureau of Meteorology's management of assets in its observing network;
- Expenditure on asset maintenance and upkeep;
- Funding for the ROBUST program;
- Staffing levels at national observing hubs;
- Extensions to contracts with iSentia; and
- Records of whistleblower incidents.

#### Program 3.1—Antarctic interests

- Repairs and upgrades at Macquarie Island;
- Progress on the Hobart Wharf project; and
- Recruitment of a new Chief Scientist.

The committee will continue its examination of the Communications and the Arts elements of the Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts portfolio on Tuesday, 25 February 2025 at 9.00am.

Please contact the secretariat on (02) 6277 3526 or [ec.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:ec.sen@aph.gov.au) if you have any questions.