



Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
Budget Estimates 2024–25
Wednesday, 29 May 2024
Daily summary

The committee met from 9.00am until 8:55pm.

The committee called the following departments and agencies:

- Official Office of the Secretary to the Governor General
- Australian National Audit Office
- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Office of National Intelligence
- National Australia Day Council
- Department of Finance
 - Outcome 2 (Electoral Policy only)
 - Outcome 3
- Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
- Parliamentary Workplace Service
- Australian Electoral Commission

Topics discussed by the committee included:

Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General

- Processes for making honourees aware of honours when non-responsive;
- Register of gifts; and
- Management of residences.

Australian National Audit Office (ANAO)

- Process for initiating an audit;
- Audits of Indigenous agencies;
- Development of ANAO work program;
- Publication of corporate plan;
- Forthcoming audits of PM&C and National Disability Insurance Agency; and
- Use of artificial intelligence (AI).

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C)

- Ukraine Peace Summit and Australian Government support of Ukraine;
- Prime Minister and ministerial level engagement with Chinese counterparts regarding People's Liberation Army Navy sonar incident with Royal Australian Navy;
- Independent Review of Commonwealth funding for strategic policy work;
- Allocation of staff to the processing of Freedom of information requests; and
- Mental health and suicide prevention Budget measures.

Office of National Intelligence

- Presence and activity of foreign intelligence operatives in Australia;
- People's Liberation Army activity in the Taiwan Strait;
- Generative artificial intelligence (AI) in the security space; and

- Threat assessments of climate change and potential impact on northern bases.

National Australia Day Council

- Grant programs over the forward estimates.

Department of Finance Outcome 2.1 and 3

- Machinery of government changes for the Parliamentary Workplace Support Services (PWSS);
- Implementation of the new Parliamentary Expenses Management System;
- Change of Senators payroll from monthly to fortnightly cycles;
- *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984 Act* enterprise agreement bargaining progress;
- Electoral reform and the use of generative AI;
- Expenses and freedom of information requests under the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017*;
- Budget allocation for the Special Envoy to the Great Barrier Reef;
- Government staffing committee; and
- Prime Ministerial pensions.

Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority

- Rates for parliamentarians travelling to Canberra.

Parliamentary Workplace Support Service (PWSS)

- Statistics around the utilisation of PWSS services; and
- Staffing and office location of the PWSS.

Australian Electoral Commission

- The possibility of an early Federal election;
- Electorate redistributions, including the use of indirect data;
- Truth in political advertising;
- Signage at electoral events;
- Representation of Indigenous Australians on the Electoral Roll;
- Electoral Integrity Assurance Taskforce report;
- Court action against individuals and organisations; and
- Increased territory representation in the Senate.

The committee will next meet at 9.00am on Thursday, 30 May 2024 in Committee Room 2S1, for further examination of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and Finance Portfolios.