



Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee
Budget Estimates 2025-26
Thursday, 27 March 2025
Daily summary

The committee met from 9.01am until 9.14pm.

The committee called the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) portfolio and the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (DITRDCA) portfolio (excluding Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development), discussing the following topics:

DCCEEW – Climate

- 2030 and 2035 emissions reduction targets and the cost of reducing emissions;
- Vehicle fuel efficiency standards;
- Energy prices and energy relief measures; and
- Impact of the Safeguard Mechanism.

Emissions Reduction Assurance Committee

- Importance of a high-integrity carbon market.

DCCEEW – Energy

- Power price fluctuations since 2022;
- Modelling of electricity costs in 2026 and beyond;
- Impact of the 82% renewable energy target on energy prices; and
- Interconnector capabilities and capacities.

Australian Renewable Energy Agency

- Funds allocated to Hydrogen Headstart and other Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) programs;
- Industrial Transformation Stream in ARENA;
- Sustainable aviation fuel and its prospects on Australian airlines; and
- ARENA's grant history to renewable energy actors and projects.

Australian Energy Regulator

- Indications from the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) on potential cuts to energy bills in the near-future due to renewable technologies;
- State specific network costs;
- Western Sydney customer energy rates affected by AER draft determination;
- Loading issues with rooftop solar during low and high demand periods; and
- The impact of extending the life of coal plants on electricity price.

DCCEEW – Environment

- Reconsideration requests and extension of deadline for a decision on a proposal to extend the life of the North West Shelf project;
- Drafting process and potential impacts of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Reconsiderations) legislation;
- Conservation measures for the Maugean Skate;
- Establishment of Environment Protection Australia;
- Operation of the nature repair market;
- Funding to meet the national target to protect and conserve 30% of Australia's landmass and 30% of Australia's marine areas by 2030; and
- Size of areas and consultation process regarding Indigenous Protected Areas.

Director of National Parks

- Review of the South-east Marine Parks Network.

Bureau of Meteorology

- Tropical Cyclone Alfred – Bureau of Meteorology website advice for the people of New South Wales and Queensland; severe weather warnings for Hervey Bay and Quilpie; weather radar coverage in south-west Queensland; briefings to Members of Parliament;
- Data on changes in the frequency and severity of weather events; and
- River gauge upgrade program for flood warnings.

DCCEEW – Australian Antarctic Division

- Funding for the Australian Centre for Excellence in Antarctic Science
- Funding for the Southern Ocean Observation System

DCCEEW – Water and Murray Darling Basin Authority

- Developments in the water recovery program;
- Water management and water security in Australia; and
- Usage of water by the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder.

DITRDCA – Communications

- Review into the impact of online Keno and foreign-matched lotteries;
- Extension of the Sky Muster Community Wi-Fi program;
- Emergency communications development and testing;
- Mobile Black Spot Program and Better Connectivity Plan; and
- Engagement with Low Earth Orbit Satellites service providers.

NBN Co Limited

- NBN support for the retail customers during recent natural disasters;
- Developments in the Sky Muster satellite service;
- NBN's Fixed Wireless Upgrade program; and
- Updates on the government initiative to provide free community Wi-Fi to 24 First Nations communities.

The committee released Program 2.2 and 2.3 of the DCCEEW portfolio, Outcome 6 of the DITRDCA portfolio and Creative Australia.

As the Parliament has now prorogued, this concludes the committee's examination of the 2025-26 Budget Estimates.

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