



Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2024–25
Monday, 4 November 2024
Daily summary

The committee met from 9.00am until 11.27pm.

The committee called the following departments and agencies:

- Department of the Senate
- Parliamentary Budget Office
- Department of Parliamentary Services
- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Workplace Gender Equality Agency
- Australian Public Service Commission
- Office of National Intelligence
- Australian National Audit Office

The committee released the National Australia Day Council from the hearing.

The committee agreed to call the Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General at 9:00am 5 November 2024.

Topics discussed by the committee included:

Department of the Senate

- Expenditure and appropriations dealing with furniture and appliance purchases;
- Conflict of interest register and policies within the department;
- Security at APH especially to do with major ceremonial events; and
- Senator's oaths and their legitimacy and opportunities to censure.

Parliamentary Budget Office

- Memorandums of understanding with government agencies and data accessibility.

Department of Parliamentary Services

- NACC exercise of a warrant at DPS premises on the 3 October 2024;
- Ongoing independent investigation into the incentive to retire payment and conflicts of interest relating to the Secretary;
- Leave arrangements of Secretary Mr Rob Stefanic, commencement of employment dates of various DPS staff;
- Parliamentary Access and Inclusion Plan audit with reference to public consultation process;
- Parliamentary Wellbeing Services, funding for a GP at Parliament House, costing of privacy pods;
- DPS Staff Survey, removal of questions from the broader APS Staff Survey;
- Sponsored passes by Mr Stefanic, update on total number of sponsored passes and highest number sponsored passes by a single parliamentarian;
- Composition and decision-making processes of the Access and Inclusion Champions Group; and

- Flag requests, sanctions for improper use of committee rooms and increase of phishing emails.

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PMC)

- Code of Conduct, reporting obligations and declarations of gifts in relation to the Prime Minister, their staff and their families, Administration and interpretation of the Ministerial Code of Conduct (flight upgrades);
- Gambling advertising reform;
- NDIS Independent Review, selection processes of Co-Chairs and the review panel;
- Learnings from COVID-19 Response Inquiry Taskforce and future pandemic preparedness;
- Reported missing cabinet documents;
- Higher education loans program and budget for announcement event;
- PMC Secretary travel allowance for travel to Melbourne;
- Process for consideration of appointments by cabinet or by correspondence, including Commissioner of the Electoral Commission;
- Defence Joint Project 9102-satellite procurement;
- Potential outcomes of the US election for Australia;
- Prime Minister's planned attendance at APEC and G20;
- Departments involved in the Senate inquiry into Ukraine; and
- Net Zero Economy Agency setup and preliminary activities.

Workplace Gender Equality Agency and PMC (Office for Women)

- Government's response to recommendations from the Senate inquiry into menopause;
- Development of WGEA datasets and the necessity to change associated legislation;
- Domestic and family violence budget allocation and progress;
- Report of the Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches to End Gender-Based Violence;
- Policy development and action regarding impact of social media and online harms to young women; and
- Development of a code for dating applications in conjunction with the eSafety Commissioner.

Australian Public Service Commission and PMC (Australian Government Consulting)

- Code of conduct issues for Ministerial and APS staff;
- The relationship between the DPS Secretary and form Deputy Secretary and possible conflicts of interest resulting from the possible close relationship;
- Open letter signed by members of the APS criticising the governments policy regarding Israel-Palestine conflict and interaction with the APS Code of Conduct;
- Robodebt: sanctions, penalties, and reprimands to individuals that were found to have breached the APS code of conduct;
- Reporting structures for the Public Service Commissioner and Parliamentary Service Commissioner; and
- Records of and contents, of declarations of conflicts of interest by Mr Rob Stefanic to the Presiding Officers.

Office of National Intelligence

- Security challenge of the energy transition and severe weather events resulting from climate change.

Australian National Audit Office

- Auditing of the land councils in the Northern Territory;
- Utilisation of generative artificial intelligence in audit and corporate operations; and
- Audit of the Australian Public Service Commission and the outcomes.

The committee will next meet at 9.00am on Tuesday, 5 November in Committee Room 2S1, for an examination of the Finance Portfolio.