

# Chapter 1

## Overview

1.1 The Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee (committee) examined the proposed 2019–20 Budget expenditure for the Health Portfolio and the Social Services Portfolio, including the Department of Human Services (DHS), at public hearings held on 5 and 10 April 2019.

1.2 This report outlines the key issues considered by the committee during its examination of the proposed 2019–20 Budget expenditure.

### Referral of documents

1.3 The Senate referred the following documents to committees for examination and report:

- particulars of proposed additional expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2020;
- particulars of certain proposed additional expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2020; and
- particulars of proposed additional expenditure in relation to the Parliamentary Departments in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2020.<sup>1</sup>

1.4 The 2019–20 Budget papers and Portfolio Budget Statements were tabled in the Senate on 2 April 2019.<sup>2</sup>

### Portfolio oversight

1.5 The committee is responsible for examining the proposed expenditure of the department and agencies within the Health Portfolio and the Social Services Portfolio (including DHS).<sup>3</sup>

### Hearings

1.6 The Senate resolved that the committee's 2019–20 Budget estimates hearings were to be scheduled on 5, 10 and 11 April 2019 and if required, on 12 April 2019.<sup>4</sup> At 8.29am on 11 April 2019, the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of

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1 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 141, 2 April 2019, p. 4815.

2 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 141, 2 April 2019, p. 4815.

3 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 2, 31 August 2016, p. 75–76; *Journals of the Senate*, No. 84, 12 February 2018, p. 2668.

4 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 133, 29 November 2018, p. 4327.

Australia issued a proclamation proroguing the 45<sup>th</sup> Parliament.<sup>5</sup> As a result of the prorogation, the committee's estimates hearing scheduled for 11 April 2019 did not proceed.

1.7 At its hearing on 5 April 2019, the committee examined outcomes and agencies of the Health Portfolio and the Social Services Portfolio (including DHS). Ministers of those portfolios were represented by Senator the Hon. Nigel Scullion and Senator the Hon. Mitch Fifield.<sup>6</sup> Evidence was also provided by senior officers of those portfolios, led by the secretaries of the portfolio departments:

- Ms Glenys Beauchamp PSM, Department of Health (DoH);
- Ms Kathryn Campbell AO, CSC, Department of Social Services; and
- Ms Renée Leon PSM, DHS.<sup>7</sup>

1.8 The committee considered all outcomes of the Health Portfolio, and all outcomes of the Social Services Portfolio bar Outcome 4: Housing, which was discharged without questions.

1.9 At its hearing on 10 April 2019, the committee further examined the outcomes of the Health Portfolio. Minister Scullion represented the ministers of the Health Portfolio and evidence provided by senior DoH officials, led by Ms Beauchamp. All outcomes of the Health Portfolio were considered during the hearing, bar Outcome 1: Health System Policy, Design and Innovation which was discharged without questions.

1.10 The committee thanks the ministers and officers who provided evidence at, and support for, the committee's estimates hearings.

### **Questions on notice**

1.11 The committee agreed that senators should lodge their written questions with the committee secretariat no later than 18 April 2019 for referral to the relevant portfolio department for response. The committee fixed 30 May 2019 as the date by which answers to questions on notice should be returned to the committee.<sup>8</sup>

1.12 Answers to questions on notice are published on the committee's estimates webpage on receipt.<sup>9</sup>

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5 Parliament of Australia, *Prorogation of the 45th Parliament and Dissolution of the House of Representatives*, [https://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/House\\_of\\_Representatives/About\\_the\\_House\\_New\\_s/Prorogation\\_of\\_the\\_45th\\_Parliament\\_and\\_Dissolution\\_of\\_the\\_House\\_of\\_Representatives](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/House_of_Representatives/About_the_House_New_s/Prorogation_of_the_45th_Parliament_and_Dissolution_of_the_House_of_Representatives) (accessed 6 May 2019).

6 *Committee Hansard*, 5 April 2019, pp. 1, 71.

7 *Committee Hansard*, 5 April 2019, pp. 1, 71–73.

8 *Committee Hansard*, 5 April 2019, p. 1.

9 See [https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Senate\\_Estimates/ca](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Senate_Estimates/ca).

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### ***Timeliness of answers from the 2018–19 Additional Budget estimates***

1.13 The Senate resolved that responses to questions taken on notice at the 2018–19 Additional Budget estimates hearings should be returned to committees no later than 29 March 2019.<sup>10</sup>

1.14 The committee asked 646 questions on notice for the 2018–19 Additional Budget estimates and answers were provided as follows:

- Health Portfolio—of the 314 questions taken on notice, 130 answers were provided by the due date, 68 answers were provided after the due date and 116 answers remain outstanding as of 14 May 2019;
- Social Services Portfolio—responses to all of the 240 questions taken on notice were provided by the due date; and
- DHS—responses to all of the 92 questions taken on notice were provided by the due date.

1.15 The committee notes the vast majority of the questions taken on notice by DHS were provided in advance of the due date and the committee thanks DHS for providing these answers as they became available.

### **Hansard transcripts**

1.16 A verbatim record of the committee's hearings is made via the *Committee Hansard*.<sup>11</sup> The *Committee Hansard* is published on the estimates webpage.

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

### **Report structure**

1.18 This report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 1—provides an overview of the conduct of the committee's 2019–20 Budget estimates hearings;
- Chapter 2—reports on the key issues considered by the committee during the hearings;
- Appendix 1—Hansard index for issues not reported in Chapter 2;
- Appendix 2—Departments and agencies called to the committee's hearings; and
- Appendix 3—Tabled documents and additional information.

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10 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 139, 13 February 2019, p. 4638.

11 The *Committee Hansard* is published online at:  
[https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Senate\\_Estimates/ca/2018-19\\_Additional\\_estimates](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Senate_Estimates/ca/2018-19_Additional_estimates).