

Chapter 1

Overview

1.1 On 2 April 2019 the Senate referred the following documents to the Education and Employment Legislation Committee (the committee) for examination and report:

- particulars of proposed expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2020;
- particulars of certain proposed expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2020;
- particulars of proposed expenditure in relation to the parliamentary departments in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2020.¹

Portfolio coverage

1.2 In accordance with a resolution of the Senate on 31 August 2016, as amended on 12 February 2018, the committee is responsible for the examination of the expenditure and outcomes of the following portfolios:

- Jobs and Small Business; and
- Education and Training.²

1.3 A full list of portfolio agencies is available at Appendix 1.

Portfolio Budget Statements 2019-20

1.4 The Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS) 2019-20 for the Jobs and Small Business and the Education and Training portfolios were tabled in the Senate on 2 April 2019.³

Jobs and Small Business

1.5 The 2019-20 PBS for Jobs and Small Business provides information on the proposed expenditure for the portfolio and details the Australian Government's priorities including:

- implementing a digital platform to assist job-ready job seekers self-service, and reinvesting in the system 'to provide more intensive, targeted and tailored support for those who need extra help';

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

2 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 2, 31 August 2016, p. 76; and *Journals of the Senate*, No. 84, 12 February 2018, pp. 2668–2669.

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

- delivering efficient and effective employment services through jobactive and complementary programs ahead of the national roll-out of a new employment services system;
- implementing initiatives to support Australians in regional areas or those experiencing challenges due to large-scale industry changes;
- providing mature age Australians with opportunities to contribute to the workforce, share their skills and insights with younger workers and continue to benefit from the economic and social wellbeing of having a job;
- increasing the proportion of seasonal work taken up by Australian job seekers and encouraging smaller farmers to participate in the Seasonal Worker Programme;
- administering payments and recovery activities under the Fair Entitlements Guarantee which assists workers who have unpaid employment entitlements when they are made redundant by the liquidation or bankruptcy of their employer;
- supporting small and family business and enterprise development, and ensuring that small business interests are considered in national economic reform; and
- contributing to higher productivity through implementation of national approaches to workplace health and safety and workers' compensation laws.⁴

1.6 The Department of Jobs and Small Business currently has the following two outcomes:

- Outcome 1: foster a productive and competitive labour market through employment policies and programs that assist job seekers into work, meet employer needs and increase Australia's workforce participation; and
- Outcome 2: facilitate jobs growth through policies that promote fair, productive and safe workplaces, and facilitate the growth of small business.⁵

Education and Training portfolio

1.7 The 2019-20 PBS for the Education and Training portfolio provides information on the proposed expenditure for the portfolio and details the Australian Government's education and training priorities including:

- the implementation of the new Child Care Subsidy to support approximately one million families balance their work, training and caring responsibilities;
- extension of the National Partnership of Universal Access to Early Childhood Education;

4 *Portfolio Budget Statements 2019-20: Jobs and Small Business*, pp. 13–14.

5 *Portfolio Budget Statements 2019-20: Jobs and Small Business Portfolio*, p. 5.

- strengthening the capacity of teachers across Australia to teach mathematics and phonics through freely available, nationally coordinated, high quality professional learning and resources;
- establishing a new scholarship program to increase the number of domestic and international students studying in regional locations;
- remitting Higher Education Loan Program debts for teachers in very remote areas of Australia;
- the establishment of a National Careers Institute and appointing of a National Careers Ambassador; and
- funding for employers and apprentices in the top 10 occupations where there is a demonstrated need for increased apprenticeship commencements and where the primary entry pathway into the occupation is through an apprenticeship.⁶

1.8 The Department of Education and Training has two outcomes as follows:

- Outcome 1: improved early learning, schooling, student educational outcomes and transitions from school through access to quality child care, support, parent engagement, quality teaching and learning environments; and
- Outcome 2: promote growth in economic productivity and social wellbeing through access to quality higher education, international education, and international quality research, skills and training.⁷

Hearings

1.9 On 28 November 2018, the Minister for Communications and Arts, Senator the Hon. Mitch Fifield, moved that Budget Estimates hearings for the committee would occur from Monday, 3 June 2019 to Thursday, 6 June 2019, with an additional day, if required, on Friday 7 June 2019.⁸

1.10 On 29 November 2018, former Senator the Hon. Jacinta Collins moved amendments to alter the proposed Budget Estimates hearing dates to 'Friday, 5 April and Wednesday, 10 April to Thursday, 11 April and, if required, Friday 12 April'.⁹ The Senate agreed to these amendments.

1.11 Accordingly the committee agreed to considered particulars of additional expenditure as follows:

- Jobs and Small Business and Education and Training portfolios—5 April 2019;
- Jobs and Small Business portfolio—10 April 2019; and

6 *Portfolio Budget Statements 2019-20: Education and Training Portfolio*, pp. 10–13.

7 *Portfolio Budget Statements 2019-20: Education and Training Portfolio*, p. 3.

8 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 132, 28 November 2018, pp. 4286–4287.

9 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 133, 29 November 2018, p. 4329.

- Education and Training portfolio—11 April 2019.¹⁰

1.12 The committee heard evidence from the following Ministers:

- Senator the Hon. Marise Payne, Minister for Foreign Affairs (representing the Minister for Jobs and Industrial Relations, the Hon. Kelly O'Dwyer MP);
- Senator the Hon. Michaelia Cash, Minister for Small and Family Business, Skills and Vocational Education; and
- Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham, Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment (representing the Minister for Education, the Hon. Dan Tehan MP).

1.13 Evidence was also provided by the following departmental secretaries who were accompanied by officers of the portfolio departments and agencies:

- Ms Kerri Hartland, Secretary, Department of Jobs and Small Business; and
- Dr Michele Bruniges, Secretary, Department of Education and Training.

1.14 The committee extends its appreciation to the Ministers and officers of the departments and agencies who assisted the committee in its conduct of the 2019-20 Budget Estimates hearings.

1.15 An index of proceedings is available at Appendix 2.

Questions on notice

1.16 In accordance with Standing Order 26(9)(a), the committee agreed that the date for the return of answers in response to questions placed on notice from the Budget Estimates 2019-20 hearings from 5 to 11 April would be 23 May 2018.

1.17 Answers to questions on notice are published as they become available on the committee's website: www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Senate_Estimates/ee.

Hansard transcripts

1.18 Committee Hansard transcripts are accessible on the committee's website: www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Senate_Estimates/ee/2019-20_Budget_estimates.

1.19 In this report, references to the Committee Hansard are to the proof transcripts. Page numbers may vary between the transcripts of the Proof Hansard and the Official Hansard.

10 Note that due to the prorogation of the 45th Parliament at 8.29 am on the morning of 11 April 2019, the committee did not proceed with the Budget Estimates hearing for the Education and Training portfolio on that date as a prorogation is regarded as terminating the scheduled sittings of the Senate and of estimates hearings.