

Senator CONROY—How are these purposes defined? Or, in other words, how much scope is there for discretion in how special account funds are spent?

Mr Hutson—Perhaps we could focus on the section 20 ones. I think they are your area of interest.

Senator CONROY—Yes, please.

Mr Hutson—So we are just talking about section 20 special accounts. The determinations which are issued by the minister set out the purposes of the account. How much control there is is limited to the purposes as set out in the determination.

Senator CONROY—I will go back to the question I asked before about the total revenue and expenditure and closing balance on all special accounts, which you said you could get.

Mr Hutson—That includes section 21 and section 20.

Senator CONROY—Could I have each individual revenue and expenditure and closing balance on each individual account. I asked for the total and then the individual.

Mr Hutson—Sure.

Senator CONROY—I did not quite hear your answer, Mr Hutson. I was asking how much scope there is for discretion in how special account funds are spent.

Mr Hutson—There is no discretion outside the purposes for the account which are set out in the determinations.

Senator CONROY—How is the designated purpose of DOFA's business services trust account defined?

Mr Hutson—I will pass to Mr Hodgson on this question.

Senator CONROY—I was just wondering if someone could read it out.

Mr Pahlow—I will read from the determination under section 20 of the FMA Act for the business services trust account. It states:

For expenditure relating to:

- (a) (i) the provision of services and matters incidental thereto being in the field of transport, printing, publishing, procurement, disposal, protection, guarding, security, storage, warehousing, packaging, analytical testing, laboratory valuation, construction project management, equipment management contract administration, real property agency, property management, surveying, land information, construction, construction design, information technology, establishment and facilities management, administrative, and related services, and any combination, co-ordination or arrangement of the above mentioned services to the Commonwealth or to a Commonwealth body or to a company over which the Commonwealth or a Commonwealth body is able to exercise control, inside or outside Australia.

Subparagraph (ii) says:

- (ii) the provision of services referred to in (i) above and matters incidental thereto, to any other person or persons, inside or outside Australia.

Paragraph (b) states:

- (b) For expenditure relating to each of the following trust accounts pending its closure Australian Government Analytical Laboratory Trust Account; Purchasing and Sales Group Trust Account; Australian Government Services Trust Account; Australian Protective Service Trust Account;

Australian Property Service Trust Account; Transport and Storage Group Trust Account; Australian Valuation Office Trust Account; Australian Survey and Land Information Group Trust Account ...

Paragraph (c) says:

(c) For expenditure comprising payments of moneys to the Consolidated Revenue Fund other than payment of a type expressly required to be paid to that fund under legislation.

Senator CONROY—Thank you. That is a pretty broad definition. Is there anything in the world that would be excluded? Is there any activity not encompassed by that?

Mr Hodgson—The business services trust account was set up to cover the activities of the previous DAS businesses which—as I am sure you are aware, Senator—were quite comprehensive in their nature and took on many private sector activities. So there is quite a range of activities which are covered.

Senator CONROY—Just about any activity that you could imagine.

Mr Hodgson—That was the purpose of the accounts set up.

Senator CONROY—So it is incredibly broad.

Mr Hodgson—Yes. My understanding is that those accounts were set up in 1991.

Senator CONROY—How are special accounts funded?

Mr Hutson—They operate in a number of different ways. They get money either from appropriations or from their own activities. For example, the property special account charges rent and that rent is then paid to the special account.

Senator CONROY—Okay. So it is appropriations and other activities.

Mr Hutson—Yes.

Senator CONROY—Where are the appropriations to special accounts shown in the budget?

Mr Bowen—They will be shown in the appropriations for a particular department for a particular purpose. I do not know whether there is more I can say about that.

Senator CONROY—So they are not recorded in the budget.

Mr Bowen—Well, they are.

Senator CONROY—They are not shown separately.

Mr Bowen—Jonathan Hutson has used the example of Finance's property account. From time to time, there have been capital appropriations to Finance to fund property development works. Those appropriations are shown quite separately and they are for the purpose of the property special account.

Senator CONROY—I am trying to find out where they are, simply. I understand they are in the agency annual reports which, as we have talked about, are 18 months after the fact. Did you want to add anything?

Mr Bowen—No, Senator.

Senator CONROY—The agency reporting table shows a column titled 'Special Appropriations', but the text states that this refers to the 70 per cent of expenditure providing funds for specific purposes—that is, to finance a particular project or program—and it does not refer to appropriations to special accounts.