

Chapter 1

Introduction

Duty to examine annual reports

1.1 The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement (the committee) has a statutory duty to examine the annual report of the Australian Federal Police (AFP) under the *Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement Act 2010* (the Act).

1.2 Subsection 7(1) of the Act includes a specific requirement for the committee to report to Parliament on matters appearing in and arising out of the annual reports of the AFP:

...(f) to examine each annual report on the AFP and report to the Parliament on any matter appearing in, or arising out of, any such annual report...¹

1.3 The duty of the committee to examine annual reports of the AFP under the Act stems from an expectation that agencies which have been granted strong coercive powers, like the AFP, should be subject to additional oversight. At the time of the introduction of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement Bill 2010, the then Attorney-General noted that the bill would exemplify the 'commitment to improving oversight and accountability in relation to the exercise of the functions of Commonwealth agencies'.²

Report under consideration

1.4 The AFP's Annual Report 2015–16 (annual report) was presented to the Minister for Justice, the Hon Michael Keenan MP, on 5 October 2016. It was tabled in the House of Representatives on 17 October 2016³ and tabled in the Senate on 7 November 2016.⁴

Examination of the report

1.5 In examining the annual report, the committee held a public hearing at Parliament House, Canberra on 14 June 2017. The witnesses who appeared before the committee are listed in Appendix 1.

Structure of the committee report

1.6 In addition to this chapter, the committee's report comprises the following chapters:

1 *Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement Act 2010*, ss. 7(1).

2 *House of Representatives Hansard*, 18 March 2010, p. 2925.

3 *Votes and Proceedings*, No. 12—17 October 2016, p. 220.

4 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 12—7 November 2016, p. 356. The annual report was presented out of sitting in the Senate on 14 October 2016.

- chapter 2 examines the AFP's compliance with reporting requirements, its performance against key performance indicators (KPIs), and issues discussed at the public hearing on 14 June 2017;
- chapter 3 the considers the AFP's complaint handling performance and the Commonwealth Ombudsman's statutory oversight of aspects of the AFP's work.

Acknowledgements

1.7 The committee acknowledges the cooperation of the AFP Commissioner and other AFP officers who assisted the committee in its examination.

Note on references

1.8 References to the *Committee Hansard* may be references to the proof transcript. Page numbers may differ between proof and official transcripts.