

Annual Report 2014-15

Introduction

1.1 The Standing Committee on Appropriations, Staffing and Security is appointed under Senate standing order 19. The Committee inquires into:

- proposals for the annual estimates and the additional estimates for the Senate;
- proposals to vary the staff structure of the Senate, and staffing and recruitment policies; and
- other matters as are referred by the Senate.

1.2 Following the Senate's adoption in March 2015 of the recommendations of the Procedure Committee in its First Report of 2015, the name of the Committee was changed from the Appropriations and Staffing Committee to the Appropriations, Staffing and Security Committee.

1.3 Standing order 19(3)(d) was also amended, giving the Committee the capacity to consider the administration, operation and funding of security measures affecting the Senate and advise the President and the Senate as appropriate.¹

1.4 Under a resolution of the Senate agreed to in 1987 the Committee also examines proposed changes in the structure and responsibilities of the parliamentary departments and, following the adoption by the Senate on 27 November 2012 of the recommendation in the Committee's 54th Report, the Committee may advise the President and the Senate on the administration and funding of information and communications technology services for the Parliament.

1.5 Under standing order 19(3)(c) the Committee is required to make an annual report to the Senate on the operations of the Senate's appropriations and staffing and related matters.

1.6 The Committee is chaired by the President of the Senate and includes the Deputy President and 8 other senators. The Senate Leaders of the Government and the Opposition are *ex officio* members.²

Committee membership

1.7 During the year, the following senators were Committee members:

1 *Journals of the Senate*, No 89, 25 March 2015, pp 2412-13

2 Senate Standing Order 19(4).

- The President of the Senate, Senator the Hon. Stephen Parry (Chairman)
- The Deputy President of the Senate, Senator Gavin Marshall
- The Leader of the Government in the Senate (Senator the Hon. Eric Abetz)
- The Leader of the Opposition in the Senate (Senator the Hon. Penny Wong)
- Senator Chris Back
- Senator the Hon. Jacinta Collins
- Senator David Fawcett
- Senator the Hon. Mitch Fifield
- Senator John Madigan

Committee activities

1.8 During the reporting period, the Committee tabled two reports:

- the Committee's Annual Report for 2013-14 (tabled on 30 September 2014) and;
- the Committee's 57th report entitled *Estimates for the Department of the Senate 2015-16* (tabled on 10 June 2015). This report was settled on the papers.

1.9 The Committee met on one occasion, on 25 September 2014. At that meeting, the Committee:

- approved the draft of its 2013-14 annual report to the Senate and authorised its tabling;
- noted correspondence from the Clerk to the President concerning items of expenditure that may have been inappropriately characterised as ordinary annual services of the government;
- in the context of previous discussions concerning shared services between the Parliamentary Departments, noted that the Senate Department had been successful in a tender for the provision of payroll and accounts-processing services to the Parliamentary Budget Office;
- discussed the Department's Budget for 2015-16 in the context of possible new policy proposals;
- in relation to correspondence with the Minister for Finance concerning \$0.2 million in targeted savings for communications and public affairs functions – savings not required of the Department of the House of Representatives – noted that the Minister had since agreed not to reduce the Department's budget for this purpose; and

- received an update on security proposals for Parliament House.

Senator the Hon Stephen Parry

Chairman

November 2015

