

Annual Report 2015-16

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

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

2 Senate Standing Order 19(4).

Committee membership

1.7 During the year, which saw the dissolution of the Senate on 9 May 2016, the following senators were Committee members:

- 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 (till 12 October 2015) and Senator the Hon. George Brandis (from 12 October 2015))
- 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
- Senator Anne McEwen (from 12 November 2015)

Committee activities

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

- the Committee's Annual Report for 2014-15 (tabled on 10 November 2015) and;
- the Committee's 58th report entitled *Estimates for the Department of the Senate 2016-17* (certified on 6 May 2016). This report was settled on the papers.

1.9 The Committee met on two occasions. At its meeting on 15 October 2015, the Committee:

- approved the draft of its 2014-15 annual report to the Senate and authorised its tabling;
- noted correspondence from the Clerk to the President concerning the 2016-17 estimates for the Department which, the Committee considered, more realistically reflected the work of the current Senate and its committees, and also represented an important step towards advancing greater budgetary autonomy for the Parliament; and
- received a briefing on security issues and proposals, and their implications for building integrity.

1.10 At its meeting on 2 December 2015, the Committee:

- considered various financial and budgetary matters, including the Department's 2016-17 estimates, and a proposed reduction in appropriations in respect of superannuation administration costs;
- noted the annual report of the Department's Audit Committee; and
- received a briefing on security issues.

Senator the Hon Stephen Parry

Chairman

November 2016