

Chapter 1

Overview

1.1 The Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations presents its report to the Senate.

1.2 On 4 December 2008¹ the Senate referred the following documents to the committee for examination and report in relation to the Education, Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio:

- Particulars of proposed additional expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2009 [Appropriation Bill (no. 3) 2008–2009];
- Particulars of certain proposed additional expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2009 [Appropriation Bill (no. 4) 2008–2009];
- Final budget outcome 2007–08, —Report by the Treasurer (Mr Swan) and the Minister for Finance and Deregulation (Mr Tanner), September 2008; and
- Issues from the Advance to the Finance Minister as a final charge for the year ended 30 June 2008

1.3 Standing committees are required to report to the Senate on 17 March 2009.

Portfolio coverage

1.4 The committee has responsibility for examining the expenditure and outcomes of the Education, Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio. Appendix 1 lists the department and agencies under this portfolio.

Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements (PAES) 2008–09

1.5 The Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS) and the Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements (PAES) inform senators of the proposed allocation of funding to Government outcomes by agencies within the portfolio. However, unlike the PBS the PAES summarise only the *changes* in funding by outcome since the Budget. For the first time, the PAES include an Agency Resource Statement, as well as the information on new measures and the Appropriation Bills.

1 *Journals of the Senate* No. 52, 4 December 2008, p. 1446.

Portfolio Supplementary Additional Estimates Statements 2008–09

Appropriation (Nation Building and Jobs) Bill (Nos. 1 & 2) 2008–09

1.6 Under the above appropriation package, supplementary estimates have been allocated to programs within the department that relate to the Government's National Building and Jobs Plan announced on 3 February 2009. These Portfolio Supplementary Additional Estimates Statements were tabled in the Senate 10 February 2009.² Appropriations from the National Building and Jobs bill were assigned to the 'Building the Education Revolution' program, with the aim of improving the quality of facilities in schools around the country. Moreover, the Department has brought forward funding of \$110 million for the 'Trade Training Centres in Schools' program from 2010–11 to 2009–10 to 'fast track measures to improve the skills base of the workforce and improve productivity for the future'.³

Hearings

1.7 The committee conducted two days of hearings, examining Education outcomes on 25 February 2009 and Employment and Workplace Relations outcomes and related agencies on 26 February 2009. In total the committee met for 16 hours and 50 minutes, excluding breaks.

1.8 The following agencies were not required at the hearings :

- Comcare;
- Australian Fair Pay Commission Secretariat; and
- Australian Industrial Registry.

1.9 The following Outcome was released without questioning:

- Outcome 5- Transitions and Youth

1.10 Appendix 2 of this report lists the table of contents of the Hansard transcripts. These transcripts are available on the committee's homepage under estimates and on the Hansard website: <http://www.aph.gov.au/hansard/senate/commtee/comsen.asp>

Questions on notice

1.11 The committee has drawn the attention of the department and its agencies to the agreed deadline of Thursday 9 April 2009 for the receipt of answers to questions taken on notice from this round, in accordance with Standing Order 26.

2 *Journals of the Senate No. 57*, 10 February 2009, p. 1579.

3 Explanation of Supplementary Additional Estimates Statements 2008–09, Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Portfolio, p. 3.

1.12 For this round, written questions on notice were received from Senators Abetz, Bernardi, Cash, Fierravanti-Wells, Hanson-Young, Humphries, Macdonald, Mason, Ronaldson and Siewert.

