

# **Additional Estimates 2005-06**

## **Introduction**

1.1 On 8 February 2006, the Senate referred to the Committee for examination and report the following documents:

- Particulars of proposed additional expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2006;
- Particulars of certain proposed additional expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2006;
- Statement of savings expected in annual appropriations made by Act numbers 72 and 73 of 2005;
- Final Budget Outcome 2004-05; and
- Advance to the Finance Minister as a Final Charge for the year ended on 30 June 2005.

1.2 The Senate also referred the following:

- Mid-year economic and fiscal outlook 2005-06;
- Consolidated financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2005; and
- The 2005 Tax Expenditures Statement.

### **Portfolio coverage**

1.3 The Committee has responsibility for examining the expenditure and outcomes of the following:

- Parliamentary departments;<sup>1</sup>
- Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio; and
- Finance and Administration portfolio.

Appendix 1 lists the departments and agencies under the portfolios mentioned above.

### **Hearings**

1.4 The Committee held public hearings on Monday, 13 and Tuesday, 14 February 2006. Copies of the Committee's transcript of evidence are tabled in two

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1 As a matter of comity between the Houses, it is traditional that neither House inquires into the operations of the other House. For this reason, neither the annual report of, nor the proposed expenditure for, the Department of the House of Representatives is referred to a Senate committee for review.

volumes of *Hansard* for the information of the Senate. Copies of *Hansard* are available on the internet at the following address: <http://aph.gov.au/hansard>.

1.5 Further written explanations furnished by departments and agencies will be tabled, when received, in volumes entitled Additional Information. That information is also available on the Committee's internet page, found at the following address: [http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/fapa\\_ctte/estimates/index.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/fapa_ctte/estimates/index.htm)

1.6 As a matter of Parliamentary Privilege, all information is 'tabled' on receipt.

1.7 Over the course of the two days' hearings—totalling 22 hours—the Committee took evidence from the President of the Senate, Senator the Honourable Paul Calvert; the Minister for Finance and Administration, Senator the Honourable Nick Minchin, representing the Prime Minister; the Special Minister of State, Senator the Honourable Eric Abetz, representing the Minister for Finance and Administration; the Minister for Ageing, Senator Santo Santoro, representing the Minister for Finance and Administration; and Parliamentary Secretary, Senator the Honourable Richard Colbeck, representing the Minister for Finance and Administration, together with officers of the departments and agencies concerned.

1.8 The following agencies were released from the hearings without examination: the Australian Public Service Commission; the National Water Commission; the Office of the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security; the Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General; the Commonwealth Grants Commission; and Australian Hearing.

### **Examination of departments and agencies**

1.9 The most notable feature of this round of additional estimates was the government directive to officials appearing before all committees not to answer questions relating to matters before the commission of inquiry into certain Australian companies in relation to the UN Oil-For-Food Programme (the Cole commission).<sup>2</sup> The directive was a major subject of debate during the Committee's examination of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and, to a lesser degree, the Office of National Assessments. Procedural issues relating to Parliamentary inquiries on matters before other proceedings such as royal commissions were also discussed during the examination of the Department of the Senate. Sections of the report dealing with those departments include some discussion of the directive and the issues it raised.

1.10 The sections of the report that follow list the other issues considered by the Committee and discuss some of these in detail. The order is not based on hierarchy but rather the order in which those issues arose during the hearings.

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2 For an overview, see *Procedural Information Bulletin*, No. 189, pp 2-4.