

PREFACE

On 9 May 2007, the Senate referred to the committee the examination of estimates of proposed expenditure for the financial year 2007-08. The committee is responsible for the examination of the Attorney-General's portfolio and the Immigration and Citizenship portfolio. The portfolio budget statements were tabled on 9 May 2007.

Reference of proposed expenditures

The Senate referred to the committee, for examination and report, the following documents:

- particulars of certain proposed expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2008 (relating to Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2007-08);
- particulars of proposed expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2008 (relating to Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2007-08);
- particulars of certain proposed supplementary expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2007 (relating to Appropriation Bill (No.6) 2006-07); and
- particulars of proposed supplementary expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2007 (relating to Appropriation Bill (No. 5) 2006-07).¹

The committee was required to report on its consideration of the budget estimates on or before 19 June 2007.

Estimates hearings

The committee met in public session from 21 May to 24 May 2007.

Over the course of the four days' hearings, totalling over 42 hours, the committee took evidence from the following departments and agencies:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner;
- Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT);
- Attorney-General's Department (AGD);
- Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity (ACLEI);

1 Appropriation bills are introduced to Parliament in pairs, as the Constitution imposes different requirements on expenditure that relates to the ordinary annual services of government and expenditure that does not relate to ordinary annual services. 'Proposed expenditure' relates to the ordinary annual services of government while 'certain proposed expenditure' relates to all other expenditure.

- Australian Customs Service (ACS);
- Australian Government Solicitor (AGS);
- Australian Federal Police (AFP);
- Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC);
- Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO);
- CrimTrac;
- Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC);
- Family Court of Australia;
- Federal Court of Australia;
- Federal Magistrates Court;
- High Court of Australia;
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC);
- Insolvency and Trustee Service of Australia;
- Migration Review Tribunal (MRT);
- National Native Title Tribunal (NNTT);
- Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions;
- Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT);
- Office of Film and Literature Classification (OFLC);
- Office of the Parliamentary Counsel; and
- Office of the Privacy Commissioner.

Copies of *Hansard* are available on the internet at the following address:
<http://www.aph.gov.au/hansard/index.htm>.

An index of the Hansard for each portfolio appears at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

Ministers

The committee heard evidence from Senator the Hon Chris Ellison, Minister for Human Services representing the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship and from Senator the Hon David Johnston, Minister for Justice and Customs who also represented the Attorney-General.

Officers from both departments and associated agencies also appeared. The committee thanks Ministers and officers for their assistance.

Questions on notice

Further written explanations, and answers to questions on notice, will be tabled as soon as possible after they are received. That information is also available on the

committee's internet page at the following address:
http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/legcon_ctte/estimates/index.

The committee has resolved that the due date for submitting responses to questions on notice from the Budget Estimates round is 6 July 2007.

Report

In this report, the committee draws the attention of the Senate to issues raised in the four days of hearings. These included:

- the expected overspend of DIAC;
- progress of the implementation of the Palmer and Comrie reports;
- the proposed citizenship test;
- the cost and staff savings associated with combining the administration of the MRT and RRT;
- the caseload of ACLEI;
- AFP recruitment;
- AFP investigations regarding the theft of military equipment;
- security arrangements and funding for the 2007 Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) Forum; and
- Mr David Hicks.

