

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 On 10 February 2011, the Senate referred the following documents to the Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee (the committee) for examination and report in relation to the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio and the Infrastructure and Transport portfolio:

- Particulars of proposed additional expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2011 [Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2010-11];
- Particulars of certain proposed additional expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2011 [Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2010-11];
- Final budget outcome 2009-2010; and
- Issues from the advances under the annual Appropriation Acts for 2009-2010.¹

1.2 The committee was required to report to the Senate on its consideration of 2010-11 additional estimates on 22 March 2011.

1.3 The committee considered the Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements 2010-11 for both portfolios at hearings on 21 and 22 February 2011. The hearings were conducted in accordance with the agreed agenda as follows:

- Monday 21 February 2011 – Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio.
- Tuesday 22 February 2011 – Infrastructure and Transport portfolio.

1.4 The committee heard evidence from Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and Senator the Hon Kim Carr, Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, representing the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport. Evidence was also provided by Ms Rona Mellor, Acting Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Mr Mike Mrdak, Secretary of the Department of Infrastructure and Transport, and officers representing the departments and agencies covered by the estimates before the committee.

1.5 The committee thanks the ministers, departmental secretaries and officers for their assistance and cooperation during the hearings.

1 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 19, 10 February 2011, p. 581.

Changes to departmental structures

1.6 The committee notes that the following changes have been made to the departmental structure of the Department of Infrastructure and Transport since the 2010-11 Budget Estimates in May 2010:

- as at 14 September 2010, the department changed its name from the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, with the transfer of the Local Government and Regional Development Division and the Office of Northern Australia to the new Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government;²
- the Major Cities Unit moved from Infrastructure Australia to within the department; and
- from 1 July 2010, the Infrastructure and Surface Transport Policy Division became the Surface Transport Policy Division.

1.7 The committee also notes that a change has been made to the departmental structure of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry since the 2010-11 Budget Estimates round. From 1 July 2010, the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE) and the Bureau of Rural Sciences (BRS) merged to become the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics – Bureau of Rural Sciences (ABARE–BRS). From 1 December 2010, the name was changed to the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES).

1.8 In December 2010, the Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation was renamed Wine Australia.

Questions on Notice

1.9 In accordance with Standing Order 26, the committee is required to set a date for the lodgement of written answers and additional information. The committee requested that written answers and additional information be submitted by Tuesday 12 April 2011.

Additional information

1.10 Answers to questions taken on notice at the committee's additional estimates hearings will be tabled in the Senate in separate volumes entitled 'Additional information relating to the examination of additional estimates 2010-2011, February 2011, Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee'. Documents not suitable for inclusion in the additional information volumes will be available on request from the committee secretariat.

2 Commonwealth of Australia, Administrative Arrangements Order, 14 September 2010.

1.11 Answers to questions on notice received from the departments will also be posted on the committee's website at a later date.

Note on references

1.12 References to the Hansard transcript are to the proof Hansard; page numbers may vary between the proof and the official Hansard transcript.

