

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

1.1 On 11 May 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 expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2012;
- Particulars of certain proposed expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2012; and
- Particulars of proposed expenditure in relation to the parliamentary departments in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2012.<sup>1</sup>

1.2 The committee was required to report to the Senate on its consideration of 2011-2012 budget estimates on 21 June 2011.

1.3 The committee considered the Portfolio Budget Statements 2011-2012 for both portfolios at hearings on 23, 24, 25 and 26 May 2011. The hearings were conducted in accordance with the agreed agenda as follows:

- Monday 23 May 2011 – Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio.
- Tuesday 24 May 2011 – Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio.
- Wednesday 25 May 2011 – Infrastructure and Transport portfolio.
- Thursday 26 May 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 Dr Conall O'Connell, 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.

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1 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 28, 10 May 2011, p. 878.

## **Changes to departmental structures**

1.6 The committee notes that no major changes have been made to the departmental structure for the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry or the Department of Infrastructure and Transport since the 2010-11 Additional Estimates.

## **Questions on Notice**

1.7 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 26 July 2011.

## **Additional information**

1.8 Answers to questions taken on notice at the committee's budget estimates hearings will be tabled in the Senate in separate volumes entitled 'Additional information relating to the examination of budget estimates 2011-2012, May 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.

1.9 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**

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