

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 On 9 February 2012, the Senate referred the following documents to the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee (the committee) for examination and report in relation to the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio, the Infrastructure and Transport portfolio, and the Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport portfolio:

- particulars of proposed additional expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2012 [Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2011-12];
- particulars of certain proposed additional expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2012 [Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2011-12];
- final budget outcome 2010-11; and
- issues from the advances under the annual Appropriation Acts for 2010-11.¹

1.2 The committee was required to report to the Senate on its consideration of the 2011-12 additional estimates on 20 March 2012. On Thursday 15 March, the Senate granted an extension of time to report until Thursday 22 March 2012.²

Variation of portfolios

1.3 Following the Administrative Arrangements Order of 14 December 2011, the Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government became its own portfolio and gained responsibility for Arts and Sport. The department became the Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport.

1.4 On 8 February 2012, the Senate amended the continuing order relating to the allocation of departments and agencies to committees. The change of allocations resulted in the committee changing its name from Rural Affairs and Transport, to Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport, and also taking responsibility for the oversight of the Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport portfolio.

Additional Estimates hearings

1.5 The committee considered the Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements 2011-12 for all portfolios at hearings on 13 and 14 February 2012. The hearings were conducted in accordance with the agreed agenda as follows:

1 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 75, 9 February 2012, pp 2090–2091.

2 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 82, 15 February 2012, p. 2257.

- Monday 13 February 2012 – Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio.
- Tuesday 14 February 2012 – Infrastructure and Transport portfolio; and Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport portfolio.

1.6 The committee heard evidence from:

- Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry;
- Senator the Hon Kim Carr, Minister for Manufacturing and Minister for Defence Materiel, representing the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport; and
- Senator the Hon Mark Arbib, Assistant Treasurer, Minister for Small Business and Minister for Sport, representing the Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government, and Minister for the Arts.

1.7 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;
- Ms Glenys Beauchamp, Secretary for the Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport; and
- officers representing the departments and agencies covered by the estimates before the committee.

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

Changes to departmental structures

1.9 On 14 November 2011, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) launched its new Strategic Statement. As a result there were some minor changes to DAFF's departmental structure. Most noticeably, the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS) is now known as *DAFF Biosecurity*. The name change will not affect the authority under which audit, inspection, and certification activities are conducted.³

3 Correspondence received from DAFF, 3 February 2012, document can be found at: www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate_Committees?url=rrat_ctte/estimates/add_1112/daff/index.htm (accessed 16 March 2012).

Questions on Notice

1.10 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 resolved that written answers and additional information be submitted by Friday 30 March 2012.

Additional information

1.11 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 2011-12, February 2012, Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee'. Documents not suitable for inclusion in the additional information volumes will be available on request from the committee secretariat.

1.12 Answers to questions on notice received from the departments will also be posted on the committee's website at a later date.⁴

Note on references

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

4 Answers to questions on notice, once received, will be published at the following: www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate_Committees?url=rrat_ctte/estimates/add_1112/index.htm (accessed 19 March 2012).

