

The Senate

Rural and Regional Affairs
and Transport
Legislation Committee

Additional estimates 2012-13

March 2013

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List of Abbreviations

ABARES	Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences
ACC	Australian Crime Commission
AECL	Australian Egg Corporation Limited
AFMA	Australian Fisheries Management Authority
AMSA	Australian Maritime Safety Authority
ANAO	Australian National Audit Office
AO	Order of Australia
APVMA	Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority
ARTC	Australian Rail Track Corporation
ATSB	Australian Transport Safety Bureau
BJD	Bovine Johne's Disease
CASA	Civil Aviation Safety Authority
CDDA	Scheme for Compensation for Detriment caused by Defective Administration
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
ESCAS	Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System
Infrastructure	Department of Infrastructure and Transport
IAC	International Agricultural Cooperation
LiveCorp	Australian Livestock Export Corporation Limited
MLA	Meat and Livestock Australia
MoU	Memorandum of understanding
MSIC	Maritime Safety Identification Card
NASAG	National Airports Safeguarding Advisory Group
Regional Australia	Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport

SEWPaC	Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities
TFES	Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme
The Bureau	Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 On 7 February 2013, 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 expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2013 [Appropriation Bill (No.3) 2012-13];
- particulars of certain proposed expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2013 [Appropriation Bill (No.4) 2012-13];
- final budget outcome 2011-12; and
- issues from the advances under the annual Appropriation Acts for 2011-12.¹

1.2 The committee was required to report to the Senate on its consideration of 2012-13 additional estimates on 19 March 2013.

Variation of portfolios

1.3 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

1.4 The committee considered the Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements 2012-13 for all portfolios at hearings on 11 and 12 February 2013. The hearings were conducted in accordance with the agreed agenda as follows:

- Monday 11 February – Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio.
- Tuesday 12 February – Infrastructure and Transport portfolio; and Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport portfolio.

1.5 The committee heard evidence from:

- Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Minister Assisting on Queensland Flood Recovery;
- Senator the Hon Kim Carr, Minister for Human Services representing the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport; and

1 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 132, 7 February 2013, p. 3606.

- Senator the Hon Kate Lundy, Minister for Sport, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting for Industry and Innovation, representing the Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government, and Minister for the Arts.

1.6 Evidence was also provided by:

- Mr Andrew Metcalfe AO, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry;
- Mr Mike Mrdak, Secretary of the Department of Infrastructure and Transport;
- Mrs 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.

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

Changes to departmental structures

1.8 Mr Metcalfe, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry informed the committee of changes to the department's structure in his opening statement on Monday, 11 February 2013, which have occurred since Supplementary Budget Estimates of October 2012.

1.9 In October 2012, the Live Animal Export Division was established with the primary purpose of implementing new regulatory processes resulting from the Farmer Review and the implementation of the Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System. The division is also responsible for providing strategic policy advice, managing stakeholder and client relations.²

1.10 In February 2013, the Post Entry Quarantine Program was established to provide strategic leadership for the program of works underway across the department to deliver the Government's new post entry quarantine facility in Melbourne.³

1.11 Currently underway is a merger of the Agricultural Productivity, Sustainable Resource Management and Climate Change divisions, essentially turning three divisions into two divisions to reflect the changing nature of the business covered by those divisions. The merger is expected to be finalised in March 2013.⁴

Questions on notice

1.12 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

2 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 5.

3 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 5.

4 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 5.

resolved that written answers and additional information be submitted by 5 April 2013.

Additional information

1.13 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 2012-13, February 2013, 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.

1.14 Answers to questions on notice received from the departments will also be posted on the committee's website at a later date.⁵

Note on references

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

5 Answers to questions on notice, once received, will be published at the following website address:
www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate_Committees?url=rrat_ctte/estimates/index.htm

Chapter 2

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

2.1 This chapter contains the key issues discussed during the 2012-13 additional estimates hearings for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio. A complete list of all the topics discussed, and relevant page numbers, can be found at appendix 3.

2.2 The committee heard evidence from the department and agencies on Monday, 11 February 2013. The hearing was conducted in the following order:

- Finance and Business Support, Government, Information Services, and People and Service Delivery
- Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences
- Climate Change
- Border Compliance, and Post Entry Quarantine Program
- Biosecurity—Plant Division
- Food
- Biosecurity—Policy Division
- Biosecurity—Animal Division
- Live Animal Exports Division
- Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority
- Meat and Livestock Australia
- Australian Livestock Export Corporation Limited
- Australian Fisheries Management Authority
- Sustainable Resource Management
- Australian Egg Corporation Limited
- Agricultural Productivity
- Trade and Market Access

2.3 The committee welcomed Mr Andrew Metcalfe AO as the new Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine, who officially commenced in these roles on 29 January 2013.

2.4 Mr Metcalfe made an opening statement and advised the committee that the department is currently undergoing a capability review being led by the Australian Public Service Commission. DAFF's structural changes are outlined in chapter one, paragraphs 1.8–1.11.

Finance and Business Support, Government, Information Services, and People and Service Delivery

2.5 The committee began proceedings by asking officials about the Scheme for Compensation for Detriment caused by Defective Administration (CDDA). Officers explained that CDDA claims cannot be dealt with until relevant legal avenues have been examined or exhausted. The committee was told that there is no set timeframe for dealing with claims and timing depends quite substantially on the interactions with the applicant.¹

2.6 The committee discussed the issue of the number of unscheduled absences taken by staff in 2011-12. The median number of unscheduled absences was 15.2 days, which ranked DAFF as the third highest agency in the *State of the Service Report 2011-12* regarding unscheduled absences. Officers explained that whilst 15.2 days was high in comparison to other large public service agencies, this result reflects a decrease from the previous year of 0.6 of a day.²

Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES)

2.7 The committee sought further information from Mr Paul Morris, ABARES' Executive Director, on the impact of the carbon tax on irrigators in the farming sector. Mr Morris explained that ABARES' work has focused on the following three main sectors of farming industry:

- broad acre farms;
- dairy farms; and
- vegetable farms.³

2.8 ABARES published a report in 2011 on the possible short-term effects of a carbon trading scheme on Australian agriculture. The committee heard that there were two elements to ABARES' research. Firstly, the direct impact of a price on carbon, such as electricity prices, and secondly, the indirect impact of a price on carbon, such as higher processing costs being passed back to the farmer.⁴

2.9 Mr Morris, told the committee that ABARES' research has found that the economic value of dairy farm production, with a \$23 a tonne carbon price in 2012-13, would result in a decline between 1.1 and 4.3 per cent, which is dependent on the proportion of the processing costs being passed back to the farmer instead of forward to the consumer.⁵

1 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 6.

2 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, pp 10–11.

3 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 13.

4 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 13.

5 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 14.

2.10 The committee also heard that the average projected income for dairy farmers declined from \$149 000 in 2011-12 to \$92 000 in 2012-13. In terms of farm business profit, it is predicted that there will be an average reduction of \$69 000 in 2011-12 to -\$11 000 in 2012-13.⁶

2.11 Mr Morris told the committee that the impact of a carbon price on vegetable farms for 2012-13 ranges between negative 2.1 per cent and negative 0.7 per cent, depending on much of the processing costs are passed forward rather than back to the farmer.⁷

2.12 The committee inquired about wild dog management in Australia, as ABARES administers, on behalf of the department, the Australian Pest Animal Research Program. Mr Morris tabled a list of successful eradication and control projects and programs.⁸

Climate Change

2.13 The committee asked about the rejection of feral camel management methodology under the Carbon Farming Initiative. Officers told the committee that there has been some difficulty in establishing baselines and methodologies for calculating emissions from feral camels.⁹

2.14 The committee heard that the Commonwealth Scientific Industry Research Organisation (CSIRO) has been working with ten laboratories across Australia on the measurement of soil carbon. The CSIRO's work has been to determine whether the new infrared spectroscopy technology is a cost effective and accurate methodology for measuring soil carbon. CSIRO will report back in March 2013, once testing of the new technology is complete. Officials told the committee that the aim of the report is to assess whether the technology can be easily and consistently provided to commercial laboratories.¹⁰

2.15 The committee clarified a response regarding the forest contractors exit package, to a question on notice from Supplementary Budget Estimates 2012. The question was in relation to whether the sale of a business to a family member could continue to operate under the package. Ms Fran Freeman, First Assistant Secretary, told the committee that if the business entity was sold then it could not access native forest contracts. There have been three formal allegations of fraud have been reported to DAFF. Two of the three allegations have been investigated and no evidence of fraud was found to have occurred. The third allegation is currently under investigation.¹¹

6 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 14.

7 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 16.

8 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 18.

9 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 21.

10 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 23.

11 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 27.

Border Compliance and Post Entry Quarantine Program

2.16 In continuing its interest from previous estimates hearings, the committee sought an update on Operation Hayride and the cost recovery process. Officers informed the committee that targeted campaigns, such as Operation Hayride, are given a notional budget from revenue collected from fees over a period of time.¹²

2.17 The committee discussed efficiencies in relation to the Import Clearance Program. Officers told the committee that DAFF has an agreement with industry to maintain the level at approximately ten per cent however, this fluctuates based on activity.¹³

2.18 Mr Schaeffer, Chief Financial Officer, explained that there a number of initiatives under way within the department to identify efficiencies, which could affect the Import Clearance Program. Mr Tim Chapman, First Assistant Secretary, also told the committee that:

...we are trying to make our business more efficient. We are looking to reduce costs in areas where we get better value for what we do. One example would be, as you have asked in estimates before, that we are doing lower levels of intervention in areas where there is very little risk... That is a way that we can do one of two things: one is redirect the staff who are doing that to another area where we get a bigger bang for our buck; another one is where we reduce staff numbers and therefore costs. There are lower costs for industry in doing that. They are able to move goods through faster. They are no longer paying inspection fees. One of the things we have found in the changing of our focus in the last couple of years is, perhaps ironically, that in lowering our intervention levels we are also having an impact on our revenue because we are not performing some of the activities that generated fees that we did in the past.¹⁴

Biosecurity—Plant Division

2.19 The committee sought further information on when DAFF might engage the Eminent Scientist Group to undertake an expanded import risk assessment. Ms Vanessa Findlay, Chief Plant Protection Officer, told the committee that DAFF considers a range of factors, including whether the technical information is contentious and the importance of the import to domestic stakeholders. A standard risk assessment is conducted by DAFF when the technical information is not contentious and the level of importance is low.¹⁵

2.20 The committee sought further information on why the risk assessment for the unshi mandarin from Japan was conducted as a standard assessment despite the mandarins being grown in an area immediately adjacent to a citrus canker area.

12 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 36.

13 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 41.

14 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 41.

15 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 42.

Ms Findlay, told the committee that Japan has been undertaking surveillance and assessment for 40 years and they had never found citrus canker. Ms Finlay went on to explain that:

...given the level of confidence we had in the surveillance programs that Japan had in place, that technically we could not ban that trade from that area.¹⁶

2.21 The committee asked DAFF to explain why in the cost recovery impact statement horticulture sector fees and charges are based on an eight-hour day and 40-hour week, when the enterprise agreement stipulates a 37½ hours per week. Ms Kylie Calhoun, Assistant Secretary, told the committee that DAFF is aware of the contradiction and has not charged the daily and weekly rates instead they are charging at the quarter-hourly rate, not to disadvantage exporters.¹⁷

2.22 The committee asked officers for an update on the Fijian ginger import risk analysis. Ms Findlay told the committee that DAFF publicly released its final import risk analysis on 22 January 2013 and is in the preliminary stages of establishing an appropriate work plan with Fiji to implement the risk assessment.¹⁸

Food Division

2.23 The committee asked for an update in relation to the importation of New Zealand apples into Australia. Ms Louise van Meurs, Assistant Secretary, told the committee five consignments or approximately 57 tonnes of New Zealand apples were imported into Australia in 2012. DAFF officials in New Zealand inspected the apples nine times before the apples were exported to Australia.¹⁹

2.24 The committee sought clarification on the exportation of baby food from an Australian backyard into China. Mr Greg Read, First Assistant Secretary, told the committee that the baby food sent to China weighed less than the 10-kilo weight limit, which is subject to regulation under the *Export Control Act 1982*. Mr Read went on to state that in this case the individual was taking advantage of an opportunity to fill a niche in the market.²⁰

2.25 The committee sought further information on the following items:

- the integrity of the data collected by the National Residue Survey;
- reducing the regulatory burden through the labelling and ongoing use of agricultural and veterinary chemicals; and
- the testing of antimicrobial residues in locally farmed aquaculture.²¹

16 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 42.

17 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 43.

18 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 44.

19 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 46.

20 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 47.

21 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, pp 49–52.

Biosecurity—Policy Division

2.26 The committee discussed the apparent flying fox problems in North Queensland. Ms Rona Mellor, Deputy Secretary, told the committee that the Minister for Agriculture, Fishery and Forestry, Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig announced \$3 million towards a research program to promote awareness amongst vets of the risks and the management of risks.²²

2.27 The committee also sought further information on the preparedness of the department for exotic diseases into Australia, specifically citrus greening disease. Ms Mellor, Deputy Secretary, explained that there is a citrus greening response plan, and response plans are generally developed by industry groups. Ms Findlay added that the citrus industry response plan will dictate and guide the industry through the first stages of an emergency response; DAFF also has an emergency plant pest response deed, which determines the roles and responsibilities of the Commonwealth government as well as the state and territory governments.²³

Biosecurity—Animal Division

2.28 The committee asked the department about the Commonwealth's role in relation to Bovine Johne's disease (BJD) in Queensland. Dr Schipp, Chief Veterinary Officer, told the committee that the Commonwealth's role relates to export certification, as any animals that are from properties identified as under suspicion or investigation for BJD are prevented from accessing the export market.²⁴

2.29 The committee asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fishery and Forestry, Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig, if some form of government assistance will be provided to beef producers who are suffering from the combined effect of the live cattle export ban and BJD. The Minister told the committee that there has been no approach by the Queensland Government for BJD assistance and as it is a state based issue normally it is dealt with by the states.²⁵

2.30 The committee sought an update on the quarantine fees for horse owners. Ms Mellor, explained that a new schedule of fees commenced on 1 February 2013. Ms Karen Schneider, First Assistant Secretary, added that the increase in quarantine fees for horse owners was due to an under-recovery in fees since November 2009. The aim of the increase is to bring the fees into line with current costs and recover the debt that has accumulated since 2009.²⁶

2.31 The committee asked whether the imports of horses are treated equally. Officers told the committee that all horses are treated equally, as the cost to maintain the service for the horse is the same no matter what sort of horse it is. Ms Mellor

22 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 53.

23 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 53.

24 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 55.

25 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 55.

26 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 56.

explained that race horses now go through the quarantine approved premises in Werribee, Victoria which has racing training facilities and is run by Racing Victoria. All other horses are held in the Post-Entry Quarantine Facility at Eastern Creek, Sydney.²⁷

2.32 Officers told the committee of the current horse import risk analysis review. A draft import risk analysis was released on 22 January 2013 for public consultation. Dr Andrew Cupit, Assistant Secretary, explained that there are a number of proposed changes regarding diseases including equine influenza, contagious equine metritis, equine viral arteritis, and pyroplasmosis.²⁸

2.33 The committee sought further information on the following topics:

- the provision of a training track for horses at the Post Entry Quarantine Facility at Mickleham, Victoria; and
- the conversion of model codes of practice into animal welfare standards and guidelines.²⁹

Live Animal Export Division

2.34 The committee sought an explanation in relation to the length of time taken to investigate allegations of animal cruelty at the Cibinong Abattoir in Java, Indonesia. Mr Phillip Glyde, Deputy Secretary, explained that:

In this particular case there was an allegation from Animals Australia that was given to us that was based on some information from an informant. We were obliged to pursue that and to ask further questions to get the detail from both Animals Australia and from that informant. Those things do take time in order to do them to a standard that is going to be acceptable as we go through and implement legislation. In this particular case, the informant was either unable or unwilling to provide that information. We gave them several opportunities and indeed Animals Australia several opportunities to provide more information.³⁰

2.35 The committee was encouraged to hear Mr Metcalfe's idea for the department and industry to come together to address concerns regarding excessive regulation and establish either a code of understanding or clearly publicised guidelines, which sets out expectations of the department and industry in order to improve transparency.³¹

2.36 The committee sought information from the department regarding the five complaints that are currently under investigation in relation to allegations of animal cruelty. Ms Rebecca Irwin, First Assistant Secretary, told the committee that in

27 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 56.

28 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 58.

29 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, pp 58-60.

30 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 61.

31 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, pp 61-62.

relation to live animal export investigations a number of divisions are involved in providing expert advice to assist in the completion of the investigation.³²

2.37 The committee asked for an update on the proposed export of live cattle from North Queensland to the Solomon Islands. Dr Cupit, Assistant Secretary, told the committee that there is an agreement in place between the Australian and Solomon Island governments. DAFF is not involved in the next step, which is for commercial parties in consultation with importers in the Solomon Islands to establish a secure supply chain. The department will become reinvolved to review the commercial parties' application regarding the Exporter Supplier Chain Assurance System (ESCAS).³³

Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA)

2.38 The committee discussed the environmental assessment charges in relation to the APVMA's service level agreements with the Department of Sustainability, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPaC) and the Department of Health and Ageing. Mr Neville Matthew, Program Manager, told the committee that there are two components to the APVMA's service agreements:

- for assessment modules a fixed fee is negotiated with the agencies on an annual basis; and
- for ad hoc requests, including chemical reviews, professional advice is structured on an hourly rate and agreed through a work order process.³⁴

2.39 The committee discussed the National Scheme for Assessment Registration and Control Use of Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals. Mr Matt Koval, Acting First Assistant Secretary, advised the committee that the reform process to harmonise the laws across all jurisdictions went to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in December 2012. COAG noted the 'progress to date' and agreed that:

...all jurisdictions will direct their regulatory and referral agencies to eliminate duplication and to avoid sequential assessments and delayed approval processes and also to utilise common information requirements for both assessments and approvals.³⁵

2.40 The committee heard in relation to COAG's decision the next process is for state and territory primary industries and agricultural ministers to agree to the APVMA's package of reforms at the Standing Council on Primary Industries meeting in May 2013.³⁶

2.41 The committee sought further information on the following topics:

32 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 63.

33 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 64.

34 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 66.

35 COAG Communique, 7 December 2012, p. 4.

36 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 68.

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- the fenthion issue in Western Australia;
 - who has responsibility for importing chemicals for use on livestock; and
 - the goat industry's access to animal health chemicals.³⁷

Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) and Australian Livestock Export Corporation Limited (LiveCorp)

2.42 The committee discussed whether consultants employed by MLA had alerted them to any breaches of ESCAS. Mr Scott Hansen, Managing Director, reiterated to the committee that MLA's consultants are neither policeman nor auditors of supply chains on the ESCAS program and they are there at the invite of commercial supply chains.³⁸

2.43 The committee also heard from Dr Peter Barnard, General Manager Trade and Economic Services, in relation to consultants alerting MLA to breaches of the ESCAS system:

I emphasise that I cannot think of a case when we are ever in an absolute position to rule on an ESCAS breach. As Mr Hansen said, that is not our role—it is the regulator's role.³⁹

2.44 The committee asked why LiveCorp's website appears to be quite out of date. Mr Raoul Nieper, Chairman, acknowledged that the website is out of date but it is currently in the process of being updated. Mr Nieper went on to state that:

LiveCorp is a very small organisation, as you would appreciate—not like our cousins MLA. We have only four permanent staff and we do appreciate with the workload that we have at present in LiveCorp we do not have a great deal of time for some of the niceties of updating websites.⁴⁰

2.45 The committee sought further information from LiveCorp on the following items:

- the review of export standards;
- the strategic plan; and
- the annual operating plan.⁴¹

Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA)

2.46 The committee discussed the publications; *The Status of Australian Fish stocks reports* and *ABARES Fishery status reports*, which were both released in December 2012. Dr Nick Rayns, Executive Manager, stated that:

37 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, pp 69–70.

38 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 71.

39 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 72.

40 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 72.

41 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, pp 72–74.

Over the last few months AFMA has been doing some media to promote the fact that we do have sustainable fisheries and that seafood consumers should be confident in their purchases of Australian seafood.⁴²

2.47 The committee asked AFMA to explain the current fishing situation on Norfolk Island. Dr Rayns told the committee that Norfolk Island has a domestic fishing industry and to some extent a charter fishing industry.⁴³

2.48 The committee sought further information from AFMA on why Norfolk Island does not have a commercial fishing industry. Dr Rayns explained that fishing rights for the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery Management Plan in the waters around Norfolk Island were granted many years ago. Officers informed the committee that Norfolk Island could buy the tradeable statutory rights to fish the Eastern Tuna and the Billfish.⁴⁴

2.49 The committee asked for an update on the Seafish application to utilise its vessel as a freezer/storage trans-shipment vessel. Dr James Findlay, Chief Executive Officer, told the committee that in early January 2013 an application was received and following receipt of the application, AFMA commenced a consultation process seeking advice from a variety of stakeholders, including the Management Advisory Committee and Resource Assessment Group. A public consultation process has also commenced and AFMA has written directly to key commercial and recreation fishing groups and conservation non-government entities seeking their input. The committee heard that submissions are currently being considered and the matter was due to go before the AFMA Commission at the end of February 2013.⁴⁵

2.50 The committee inquired about whether the level of consultation that AFMA has taken, in relation to Seafish's application, was usual. Dr Findlay told the committee that:

It is very usual for us to go to management advisory committees and the resource assessment groups on a question like this. It is also not unusual or us to approach key stakeholder groups. The unusual step here is the public consultation phase. That is a new phase for AFMA, and really reflects the fact that we saw a large reaction around the activities of this boat previously and it would be silly for us not to seek those comments upfront.⁴⁶

2.51 The committee asked AFMA what issues it will be considering when evaluating Seafish's application. Dr Findlay explained that the current application raises two issues:

One is that this is a quota-managed fishery and we need to ensure the integrity of the quota management arrangements, which means we have a

42 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 74.

43 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 76.

44 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 76.

45 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 81.

46 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 81.

robust way of measuring the amount of fish that have been caught and by which vessel. That is how we attribute its quota. This may make that process more difficult but we also have ways to get around that. The other question for us is whether the actual process of transferring fish involves greater risk or otherwise to non-target species.⁴⁷

2.52 The committee sought further information from AFMA on the following topics:

- the fish stocks of the Coral Sea fishery;
- Gulf of Carpentaria fisheries;
- the northern prawn fishery;
- an update on the bioregional planning regime in relation the joint authority fishery;
- changes to fees and charges;
- an update on the Borthwick Review; and
- the issue of gillnetting in relation to sea lion and dolphin deaths.⁴⁸

Sustainable Resource Management

2.53 The committee asked for an update on the Caring for Our Country program, and discussed whether a prospectus would be released for the Sustainable Agriculture stream, which would contain the guidelines for grant applications. Mr Ian Thompson, First Assistant Secretary told the committee that there has been no decision yet to release a prospectus.⁴⁹

2.54 The committee also discussed the funding available through the Caring for Our Country program to support regional bodies. Mr Thompson explained that regional bodies would make one application to access both the environmental and agricultural funding streams. Any funding would be provided in proportion to the amount of money available in each stream.⁵⁰

2.55 In continuing its interest from previous estimates hearings, the committee asked for an update on the number of feral camels culled. Ms Michelle Lauder, Assistant Secretary, told the committee that over four years DAFF has removed 116 000 camels.⁵¹

2.56 The committee also discussed whether the department was aware of statements made by the camel industry in relation to exporting the unmet demand for

47 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 81.

48 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, pp 77–92.

49 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 91.

50 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 91.

51 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 95.

camel meat. Mr Thompson explained that there are two issues in relation to the exportation of camel meat:

...access to some markets as well would need to be sorted through, but that is not to say it is not possible; it is just that we do not have arrangements for exporting camel meat to every country in the world—including to some of those that might like it. The camels are widely dispersed and a long way from abattoirs and it is a very expensive business to bring them in to commercially, cost-effectively slaughter them and box them for export.⁵²

2.57 The committee asked officers to provide an update on the feral pig management program. Officers told the committee that feral pigs have largely been the responsibility of landholders, local government and the states to manage.⁵³

2.58 The committee asked in relation to the Weed Control and National Weed Management Strategy whether funding has supported an improved knowledge of herbicide management and alternative management strategies. Mr Thompson told the committee that the department does not have any management of how effective the research has been in terms of application. Mr Thompson went on to state that the beneficiaries of the research are land care groups, national standards bodies, and local and state governments as they apply the research to their action on weeds program.⁵⁴

2.59 The committee sought further information on the following topics:

- the proposed system for counting Southern Bluefin Tuna;
- budget funding for Reef Rescue;
- the sinking of illegal entry vessels in the waters off Christmas Island and spilling toxic water into the only known spawning ground of Southern Bluefin Tuna; and
- amending the *Primary Industries Energy Research Development Act 1989* to allow prawn producers and other seafood sectors to raise levies to establish a marketing campaign to promote Australia's seafood.⁵⁵

Australian Egg Corporation Limited (AECL)

2.60 The committee discussed why the AECL decided to withdraw its application for a Certification Trade Mark covering an enhanced Quality Assurance program for the Australian egg industry that included a free-range egg definition of 20 000 birds per hectare. Mr James Kellaway, Managing Director, told the committee that the AECL is reviewing the 171 standards that were raised in the initial assessment published by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission. The AECL intend on resubmitting their application; however there has been no timeframe set as

52 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 95.

53 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 97.

54 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 98.

55 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, pp 98–102.

they work through the issues raised in the initial assessment and convene a meeting of the Hen Welfare Forum.⁵⁶

2.61 The committee also sought further information on the following items:

- results from the 2010 survey of egg producers;
- stocking numbers of free range egg producers;
- level of support provided to egg producers;
- Egg Corp Assured; and
- the current model code of practice for rotating chickens producing free range eggs.⁵⁷

Agricultural Productivity

2.62 The committee asked the department to provide an update on the composition of the International Agricultural Cooperation program (IAC) for citrus. Mr Koval explained that:

...the process for establishing the IAC is under Horticulture Australia Limited. They go through an independent selection process, as far as I am aware, and they call for nominations. You have to have an understanding to a certain extent of the industry and, naturally, citrus growers have that knowledge.⁵⁸

2.63 The committee sought further information from the department in relation to recent trends in grain production, including factors affecting grain production and factors affecting the viability of farming properties in the broad acre farming sector. Mr Koval told the committee that productivity growth is declining not just in Australia but around the world and remarked on the importance of understanding the work that ABARES has conducted in relation to productivity and identifying what causes slow productivity growth.⁵⁹

2.64 The committee discussed the issue of snail control on the Yorke Peninsula, South Australia as it poses a serious problem for all cereal growers in 2013. Mr Koval tabled a written brief on the issue of snail control on the Yorke Peninsula and added that the Grain Research and Development Corporation in collaboration with the department is about to commence a survey over the course of the year to get a better understanding of the breadth of the infestation.⁶⁰

2.65 The committee sought further information on the following topics:

56 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 102.

57 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, pp 102-105.

58 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 105.

59 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 106.

60 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 107.

- locusts and the concerns expressed by the Australian Plague Locust Commission;
- white grain research funding;
- the expansion of irrigated agriculture in northern Australia; and
- the Regional Food Producers Innovation and Productivity Program.⁶¹

Trade and Market Access

2.66 The committee asked the department to advise how many memorandums of understanding (MoU) have been negotiated by DAFF with trading partners to open markets for the export of livestock. Ms Jo Evans, First Assistant Secretary, told the committee that since 2004, DAFF has signed nine MoUs with countries predominately in the Middle East and Africa. The department is currently negotiating MoUs with Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco and Syria.⁶²

2.67 The committee sought further information on the priority market for the export of livestock. Ms Evans explained that:

...the No. 1 priority market that we have been advised of the industry side is Iran.⁶³

2.68 Ms Evans went on to explain that DAFF has been negotiating an MoU with Iran since 2005 and a number of drafts have been exchanged, however there are a number of issues that are under review from the Australian government's perspective.⁶⁴

2.69 The committee sought more information on the following topics:

- the report that Australian sheep were being sold to unaccredited livestock markets in Kuwait;
- Indian tariffs of up to 100 per cent on horticultural produce coming out of Australia;
- the number of consignments of Australian beef sitting on the wharf in Jakarta; and
- why Australia has not launched a World Trade Organisation challenge on Indonesian import restrictions.⁶⁵

61 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, pp 107–114.

62 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 118.

63 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 118.

64 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, p. 118.

65 *Estimates Hansard*, 11 February 2013, pp 118–122.

Chapter 3

Infrastructure and Transport portfolio

Department of Infrastructure and Transport

3.1 This chapter contains the key issues discussed during the 2012-13 Additional Estimates hearings for the Infrastructure and Transport portfolio. A complete list of the topics discussed, and relevant page numbers, can be found at Appendix 4.

3.2 The committee heard evidence from the department on Tuesday, 12 February 2013. The hearing was conducted in the following order:

- Corporate Services
- Australian Rail Track Corporation
- Infrastructure Australia
- Nation Building—Infrastructure Investment
- Surface Transport Policy
- Australian Maritime Safety Authority
- Policy and Research
- Major Cities Unit
- Office of Transport Security
- Aviation and Airports
- Airservices Australia
- Civil Aviation Safety Authority
- Australian Transport Safety Bureau

Corporate Services

3.3 The committee began by discussing what actions the department is taking to address the recommendations of the departmental capability review. The Secretary, Mr Mrdak advised the committee that an action strategy had been lodged with the Australian Public Service Commissioner, which included a number of steps principally focused on three key areas:

- strategic direction;
- performance management; and
- regulatory activities.¹

3.4 Mr Mrdak told the committee that he did not see the need for a formal corporate plan to set out the Department of Infrastructure and Transport's strategic

1 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 5.

direction; instead he is considering a corporate direction statement to better communicate with industry groups.²

3.5 Officers informed the committee that the current staff performance management system has been very focused on providing training to managers. The current performance management framework is focused on the one-on-one relationship between the supervisor and the person reporting to them. The committee heard that the department would like to change the performance management framework to expand the number of people involved in the process.³

3.6 The committee asked for an update on the work that is currently being undertaken by consultants, including information on the largest consultancies. Officers told the committee that the two largest consultancy projects are the second airport for the Sydney region and the high-speed rail study.⁴

3.7 The committee heard that the consultancy work for second airport for the Sydney region has focused on analysing the social, economic, environmental and engineering impacts of creating an airport at the site in Wilton.⁵

3.8 The committee heard that the phase two report into the high-speed rail study is due for completion shortly. Officers discussed the structure of the report, which will contain the following information:

- capital cost estimates for the preferred options;
- financing options;
- revenue forecasts; and
- an overall assessment of the economic and financial viability of a high-speed rail network.⁶

3.9 The committee sought an explanation from the department as to why the answers to questions on notice from the October 2012 Supplementary Budget Estimates were two months late. Mr Mrdak, explained to the committee that the department met many but not all of their timeframes.⁷

Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC)

3.10 The committee sought an update on the proposed inland rail route. Mr Fullerton, Chief Executive Officer, told the committee that the bottom section of the inland rail from Melbourne to Parkes has been upgraded. The ARTC also acquired the Werris Creek to North Star section of track which forms part of the proposed

2 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 6.

3 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 7.

4 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 8.

5 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 8.

6 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 9.

7 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 10.

inland route. The committee further heard that the Government has made a commitment of \$300 million in the Nation Building Two program for the proposed inland route.⁸

3.11 The committee asked officers to explain the ARTC's recent takeover of the Sydney metropolitan freight network. Mr Fullerton, explained that the takeover of the network includes the Port Botany rail line. The committee sought further information on the Moorebank Intermodal Terminal and how the ARTC plans to solve the congestion problems surrounding Port Botany.⁹

Infrastructure Australia / Nation Building—Infrastructure Investment

3.12 The committee discussed the National Freight Strategy. Officers told the committee that the Ministerial Standing Committee on Transport and Infrastructure decided to transition the strategy from Infrastructure Australia to the department, as Infrastructure Australia has provided its advice and analysis and now it is the role of the department to work with state and territory administrations to establish an implementation plan.¹⁰

3.13 In continuing its interest from previous estimates hearings, the committee sought an update on the following infrastructure projects:

- Toowoomba Range crossing;
- expanding the Warrego highway;
- Roads to Recovery budget for Western Australia;
- Yeppen floodplain;
- construction of Maranoa Bridge over the Mitchell River;
- Bruce Highway;
- Pacific Highway;
- Blakey's Crossing at Townsville;
- Scone level crossing;
- Mackay ring road;
- Great Eastern Highway;
- Great Northern Highway; and
- Burdekin bypass.¹¹

8 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 12.

9 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 12.

10 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 16.

11 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, pp 17–18, 20–22, 26–27, 29 and 30.

3.14 The committee discussed the following Nation Building Two projects, specifically the funding commitments and whether the projects were contained in the contingency reserve:

- Parramatta to Epping rail link;
- Moreton Bay rail link;
- Richmond Bridge;
- Princes Highway West;
- Tasman Highway;
- Legacy Way Northern Tunnel link; and
- F3 Sydney orbital.¹²

3.15 The committee inquired about budget cuts for the Nation Building Two program. The department advised the committee that the government is yet to take critical budget decisions around the overall shape and size of the program.¹³

3.16 The committee discussed the draft Public Transport Strategy. Mr Deegan, Infrastructure Coordinator, informed the committee that the Public Transport Strategy is regarded by Infrastructure Australia as an urban transit strategy, which will include a comprehensive overview of the different forms of road and rail public transport. The Public Transport Strategy will be released in 2013.¹⁴

3.17 The committee discussed the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator legislation (the Regulations) that has commenced operation in Queensland, which is the host jurisdiction. Officials told the committee that once the Queensland Government has passed the second tranche of bills, which occurred on Thursday, 14 February 2013,¹⁵ then other jurisdictions have the opportunity to pass enabling legislation. The only state yet to agree to the Regulations is Western Australia.¹⁶

3.18 Officials told the committee that they identified 600–800 variations from previous state-based heavy vehicle laws. The introduction of the regulations is estimated to improve the productivity benefit by up to \$30 billion over 20 years.¹⁷

3.19 The committee sought a progress report on the work being completed on the Midlands Highway. Mr Jagers, Executive Director, outlined the following key projects for the Midlands Highway which have received funding:

- Brighton bypass;

12 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 19.

13 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, pp 19–20.

14 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 23.

15 *Queensland Parliament Hansard Proof*, 14 February 2013, p. 258.

16 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 34.

17 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, pp 35–36.

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- refurbishment of Bridgewater Bridge; and
 - planning for the Baghdad bypass.¹⁸

3.20 The committee asked officers whether the department had carried out a cost estimate to duplicate the Midlands Highway. Officers explained that the department had not carried out an estimate, although they believe that the Tasmanian government had.¹⁹

Surface Transport Policy

3.21 The committee sought further information regarding the availability of funding for the Seatbelts on Regional School Buses Scheme. Officers told the committee that the scheme for 2012-13 had been allocated \$1 million of funding and received 50 applications, which are currently under assessment and are expected to be finalised by April 2013.²⁰

3.22 In continuing its interest from previous estimates hearings, the committee asked the department whether costings had been prepared to extend the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme (TFES) to all freight goods. Officers advised that the committee that preliminary work has begun in relation to expanding the freight categories, which will be included in the review of the TFES program and the freight rates. The committee heard that the TFES program review is about to commence.²¹

3.23 The committee asked whether there have been any cuts to the TFES. Officials informed the committee that there has been no reduction in funding, as the scheme is a demand-driven program.²²

3.24 The committee discussed whether the department is currently considering any proposals which support an export shipping service specifically from Bells Bay, Tasmania. Officers explained that they are aware of proposals; however, there are currently no formal proposals in front of the government.²³

Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA)

3.25 The committee discussed the Marine Orders Part 3 Issue 7, which determines the qualifications required of seafarers and how the change in qualifications compares to international standards. Officers explained that AMSA is generally consistent with international standards, and in some cases, the Australian standards are higher. The committee sought further information on whether there has been any proposals put forward to reduce the period of training a cadet requires to become a marine engineer

18 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 36.

19 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 36.

20 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 44.

21 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 45.

22 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 46.

23 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 45.

watch keeper from three years to one year. Mr Peachey, Chief Executive Officer, told the committee that no proposal had been suggested as:

The engineers in AMSA have a common interest here to ensure that standards are appropriate and deliver the safety objectives that we are bound by. We have an overriding obligation to ensure that we are consistent with international conventions relevant to these matters, in particular the [Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping] convention.²⁴

3.26 The committee asked officials whether AMSA has been involved in or made an application to the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Populations and Communities (SEWPaC), to destroy illegal entry vessels in the waters off Christmas Island. Officials advised the committee, that they have had no involvement and made no application to SEWPaC to destroy illegal entry vessels.²⁵

3.27 Mr Mrdak, sought to clarify on behalf of AMSA, evidence that had been provided to the committee in relation to the destruction of illegal entry vessel:

Earlier today AMSA advised the committee...that AMSA was not involved in the dumping of asylum seeker vessels. Although there is no obligation to advise AMSA, advice of the dumping of asylum seeker vessels is occasionally provided in the context of winding up a search and rescue operation in which vessels from Defence or Customs and Border Protection have been participating. AMSA does not keep specific records of the dumping of asylum seeker vessels.²⁶

Policy and Research

3.28 The committee asked the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (the Bureau) to explain how its yearly research plan is developed and what opportunities there are for organisations, such as state governments and businesses, to suggest research projects. Officials told the committee that the primary customer of the Bureau's work is the minister and the department. As such the Bureau liaises with divisions across the department to identify research needs for the coming year, which are approved by the Secretary.²⁷

3.29 The committee sought further information from the Bureau on several areas including:

- a breakdown of staffing levels;
- 2012-13 research projects;
- categories of research work;
- research on the state of local, state and federally controlled bridges across Australia; and

24 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, pp 47–48.

25 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, pp 50–51.

26 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 79.

27 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, pp 51–52.

-
- projects currently underway with the Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport.²⁸

Major Cities Unit

3.30 The committee asked officials to explain why in the draft Walking, Riding and Access to Public Transport Report; it states that Sydney has not experienced the same growth in cycling as Melbourne. Ms Ekelund, Executive Director, told the committee that:

One of the major disincentives to cycling is safety concerns—whether they are real or perceived concerns about safety—one of the best ways to relieve the concerns is to invest in protected cycling infrastructure...and certainly the city of Sydney itself has seen quite a lot of controversy because not everybody is appreciative of the infrastructure that it is putting in there. Local government in Sydney has also been working collectively to establish a network of cycling infrastructure that spans 14 local authorities.²⁹

3.31 The committee also asked the department for an update on process to finalise the draft Walking, Riding and Access to Public Transport Report. Officials told the committee that once submissions have been assessed, then relevant areas of the department will work together to decide what options may exist and the level of funding required. The report is expected to be finalised before the end of the current financial year.³⁰

Office of Transport Security

3.32 The committee asked officers to explain whether a Maritime Security Identity Card (MSIC) is required to work in Australia's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Officers told the committee that a MSIC is required to work in the security designated areas of the EEZ; however, individuals could work in other areas of the EEZ without a MSIC.³¹

3.33 The committee briefly discussed the issues of illegal access to the port in Fremantle in an attempt to stop operations, particularly live cattle and sheep loading, and security vetting of labour hire subcontractors.³²

Aviation and Airports

3.34 The committee discussed the master plan at Jandakot Airport and whether the development of the commercial precinct is taking precedence over the aviation related development. Mr Doherty, Executive Director, told the committee that:

Under the master plan process we are certainly concerned to ensure that provision is made for the growth and development of the airports...they

28 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, pp 53–54.

29 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 55.

30 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 55.

31 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 58.

32 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, pp 58–59.

also include a measure of development for non-aeronautical purposes, and part of the reason that balance is important is the commercial realities of funding the work under the privatised scheme that we have.³³

3.35 The committee asked for an update on the work that the National Airports Safeguarding Advisory Group (NASAG) has taken since the guidelines were agreed in 2012. Officer told the committee that NASAG will prepare a report in May 2013. The report will provide ministers with an overview of NASAG's first twelve months of operations and if any reforms to the group are required.³⁴

3.36 Officers were asked what advice and action they had taken in relation to the Queanbeyan City Council's decision to rezone the land at Tralee. The committee heard that the department sought and provided legal advice to the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport regarding recourse for the Commonwealth to intervene in the decision of the New South Wales Planning Minister.³⁵

3.37 The committee asked whether the department or minister had published a formal response to the recommendations of the *Joint Study on Aviation capacity in the Sydney region*. Mr Mrdak, explained that the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, the Hon. Anthony Albanese MP released a statement setting out the government's position on some of the key outcomes of the joint study. The department is currently concluding three pieces of work, which will provide the next stage of advice for the government.³⁶

3.38 The committee also sought information on the following topics:

- Moruya Airport;
- consideration of another environmental impact statement being conducted on Sydney Airport;
- Jandakot Airport lease arrangements; and
- Bankstown Airport.³⁷

Airservices Australia

3.39 The committee discussed the *Operational Performance and Capacity Assessment for Perth Airport Report* and sought further information on the cost of the report, as well as the delay between receiving the report and releasing the report to the public. Officers told the committee that the delay in making the report public was due to Airservices Australia receiving the report in draft form and then holding

33 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 59.

34 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 59.

35 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 62.

36 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 62.

37 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, pp 63–66.

consultations with industry and the various stakeholders involved to develop a strategic and action plan for each site in the report.³⁸

3.40 Officers told the committee that the most critical initiatives for Perth Airport identified in the report was to alleviate the runway occupancy times, to effectively increase the airport's capacity. The committee heard from Mr Hartfield, Executive General Manager, that currently Perth Airport experiences three peaks of demand caused by the first morning peak:

The first peak is in the morning...where there are about 110 aircraft overnight at Perth, every night. About 90 of those aircraft want to depart between 5.30 and 8.30 in the morning, in a three-hour period. All of those aircraft are departing and if we are in what I would call a departure mode, we can get away about 40-odd aeroplanes an hour... depending on how the traffic flows for the day, it gets into that afternoon peak which has a lot more airline or regular public transport traffic in it, and that is where we are seeing the excessive peaks and the excessive holding.³⁹

3.41 The committee sought an update on the number of airspace closures due to a lack of air traffic controllers. Ms Staib, Chief Executive Officer, tabled the number of occasions between 1 July 2009 and 10 January 2013 when airspace has been closed, and told the committee this equated to approximately 65 flights out of 12 million.⁴⁰

3.42 The committee asked officers to provide an update on the following matters:

- concerns about staff turnover, including bullying and harassment within Airservices Australia;
- the appointment of Mr Greg Hood;
- corporate sponsorship by Airservices Australia;
- Archerfield Airport; and
- freedom of information requests.⁴¹

Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA)

3.43 The committee discussed CASA's current tender for indoor plants. Mr Jordon, Chief Operating Officer explained that the tender is for the maintenance of existing plants for the next three years and not for additional plants. The committee was interested in how this tender fitted within the increase in the efficiency dividend, as plants for Senators and Members were removed as cost cutting measure.⁴²

3.44 The committee asked officers to explain the potential threat to aviators from the new wave of industrial wind turbines. Mr McCormack, Director of Aviation Safety told the committee that if wind farms are within 15–30 kilometres of an airfield, then it is the responsibility of the wind farm owner/operator to ensure the

38 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 66.

39 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, pp 67–68.

40 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 71.

41 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, pp 70–71.

42 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 74.

wind turbines do not impinge on the safety slope, which leads into the runway. If this does occur CASA has the power to make wind farm operators/owners place lights on the turbines.⁴³

3.45 The committee asked in relation to the Federal Aviation Administration Audit conducted in late 2009 for an update on the items, which were found to be deficient. Mr McCormack informed the committee that the major issue was that CASA did not have sufficient training in place for the inspectorate. In response to the audit, Mr McCormack explained that a training school in Brisbane has been setup, where all inspectors undergo training to supplement their on-the-job training.⁴⁴

3.46 The committee sought further information on the following topics:

- Portfolio Budget Statements;
- recreational aircraft registration; and
- aviation treaties.⁴⁵

Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB)

3.47 The committee discussed the ATSB's Portfolio Budget Statements, and sought more information on the budgetary pressures and areas where key savings have been made. Mr Dolan, Chief Commissioner explained that the ATSB is largely a staff driven organisation, which requires the agency to carefully manage its future staffing arrangements.⁴⁶

3.48 The committee asked officers if the expected level of training for investigators has changed due to budgetary pressures or whether it remained similar. Mr Dolan, told the committee that the ATSB has slightly changed the work level standards for investigators, which was not as a result of cost pressures.⁴⁷

43 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 75.

44 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 77.

45 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, pp 75–77.

46 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 80.

47 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 80.

Chapter 4

Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport portfolio

Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport

4.1 This chapter contains the key issues discussed during the 2012-13 Additional Estimates hearings for the Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport portfolio. A complete list of all the topics discussed, and relevant page numbers, can be found at Appendix 5.

4.2 The committee heard evidence from the department on Tuesday, 12 February 2013 from the following outcomes and agencies:

- Corporate Services
- Regional Development
- Local Government
- Services to Territories
- Office for the Arts
- Australia Council
- Office for Sport

Corporate Services

4.3 The committee asked for an update on the programs the department's administers. Ms Beauchamp, Secretary, advised that the department is responsible for providing support to a number of large programs, including the Regional Development Australia Fund, Community Infrastructure Grants, the Local Government Reform Fund and the Centre for Excellence in Local Government. The department also leads and coordinates many place based interventions in priority areas for government, such as the Murray-Darling, Tasmania and the Upper Spencer Gulf.¹

4.4 The committee asked how the department is progressing in terms of meeting the efficiency dividend. Ms Beauchamp, explained that the total number of staff has reduced in 2012-13 compared to 2011-12, as some programs were either one-off or have finished. The committee also heard that consultancy fees have decreased, as the department actively seeks to minimise the use of consultants by focusing on up-skilling staff.²

4.5 An area of particular interest for the committee was the department's building lease arrangements. Officers were asked to detail the most expensive office space and lease space. The committee heard that the department's lease in Garema Court is the

1 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 88.

2 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, pp 89–90.

most expensive in terms of total cost, and the lease for the Office for the Arts in St Georges Terrace, Perth is the most expensive office space per square metre.³

4.6 The committee sought further information on the following items:

- credit card misuse;
- engagement with the Regional Australia Institute;
- the average personal leave per employee per year; and
- the number of active compensation cases.⁴

Regional Development

4.7 The committee sought an update on the amount of funding available in the Regional Australia Development Fund. The committee heard that the first two rounds of funding have already been committed with another two rounds open for expressions of interest and application. Funding for the first round was \$150 million, \$200 million in the second round, \$50 million for the third round and \$175 million in the fourth round.⁵

4.8 The committee heard that there are 88 projects under the Community Infrastructure Grant program, 32 have been completed, 39 are in progress, one project is under contract negotiation and 16 are unapproved as they are undergoing the due diligence process.⁶

4.9 The committee asked why the North Queensland Irrigated Agriculture Strategy web page had not been updated since July 2012. Officers explained that due to staffing constraints the website had not been updated, however, work on the strategy has continued. The Commonwealth Scientific and Industry Research Organisation (CSIRO) has provided the department with a report on the range of activities it has undertaken, which will form part of the 12 technical reports to be released this year. In addition to the technical reports, two final reports will also be released at the end of 2013, one on each catchment and an overall summary.⁷

4.10 The committee asked the department to detail its involvement in the beef industry specifically in northern Australia. Officers told the committee that the Northern Australian Ministerial Forum has worked with the beef industry and the Australian Bureau of Agricultural Research and Economic Science to identify the risks and opportunities facing the northern beef industry.⁸

3 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, pp 89, 92–94.

4 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, pp 90–91.

5 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, pp 94–95.

6 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 95.

7 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, pp 100–101.

8 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 101.

4.11 The committee also asked about the work of the Northern Australia Ministerial Forum. Officers explained that the forum was established in 2010 and provides an opportunity for strategic leadership and collaboration across jurisdictions in relation to the sustainable development of northern Australia. Membership of the forum includes regional development ministers from the Commonwealth, Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australia.⁹

4.12 Officers told the committee that the Northern Australia Ministerial Forum has met five times since 2010 and despite changes to governments in two jurisdictions (Queensland and the Northern Territory), the forum remains a consensus and collaborative based environment.¹⁰

4.13 The committee asked for an update into developing water resources in Northern Australia. Mr Dickson, Director, explained the importance of developing long-term sustainable water resources to ensure the economic development of the north. Mr Dickson went on to explain that:

...the Australian Government has commissioned primary research on both the opportunities for broad scale irrigated agriculture, drawing on the development of surface water, as well as opportunities for mosaic development, drawing on groundwater resources...this work is focused on the availability and suitability of soil and water resources through the beef industry, the animal production systems that could utilise...the socio-economic viability of beef enterprises in industries that rely in part on mosaic irrigation.¹¹

4.14 The committee sought further information on the following items:

- Horsham theatre and art gallery;
- the funding agreement with Unity Housing;
- Gawler rail line;
- the Wakefield Regional Council water supply arrangement and the South Australian Water corporation funding agreement;
- the AACo abattoir in Darwin;
- the Ord River scheme;
- the Hunter Valley regional strategic infrastructure plan;
- the Murray-Darling Basin economic diversification fund; and
- the possibility of relocating the department above the Tropic of Capricorn.¹²

9 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, pp 104–105.

10 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 105.

11 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, pp 105–106.

12 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, pp 96–100, 102.

Local Government

4.15 The committee discussed what actions the department has taken since the Expert Panel released its report in December 2011 on Constitutional Recognition of Local Government. Officers told the committee that the department has worked with Parliament to establish the Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition of Local Government, as well as forming an interdepartmental committee which will investigate the timing and success factors of a referendum.¹³

4.16 Officers told the committee that the government will wait and make its decision once the final report from the Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition of Local Government has been released at the end of March 2013. Ms Fleming, Director, advised the committee that a referendum bill is required before the department can begin negotiations with the states. The committee heard that the latest the Bills could be considered by Parliament is June 2013.¹⁴

4.17 The committee asked officers for an update of the Financial Assistance Grants review. Ms Fleming, told the committee that the Grants Commission has set dates for hearings in Canberra, and submissions were due on 1 March 2013. The Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development, and Local Government the Hon Simon Crean MP announced that the focus of the review is to assess the efficiency and effectiveness in relation to the distribution of funding.¹⁵

4.18 The committee sought an update on the Local Government Reform Fund. Officers told the committee that phase one has been completed and phase two has commenced with 12 of the 18 projects completed and the remainder due for completion by 30 June 2013.¹⁶

4.19 The committee sought an update on the work of the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government. Ms Fleming, explained that the centre has built awareness on the use of debt and financing to increase the capacity of local governments.¹⁷

Services to Territories

4.20 The committee asked for an update on the Road Map for Norfolk Island, and sought specific information in relation to the privatisation and monopolisation of the marketplace, and the upgrading of the facilities at the Kingston and Cascade piers. Officers told the committee that under the current funding agreement with Norfolk Island, the department is seeking to increase the number of competitors in the marketplace. The department has no plans to upgrade the facilities at Kingston and Cascade piers, as officers reminded the committee that Norfolk Island is a

13 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 113.

14 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, pp 113–114, 117.

15 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, pp 115–116.

16 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 115.

17 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 117.

self-determining government which has responsibility for infrastructure on Norfolk Island.¹⁸

4.21 The committee sought further information in relation to whether the government was committed to its agreement to extend the Australian tax system to Norfolk Island in 2014-15. Ms Beauchamp explained that the department is currently working with the Norfolk Island government and the Australian Tax Office to identify priority areas and milestones that can be sustained by Norfolk Island without negatively impacting business and the local community.¹⁹

Office for the Arts/Australia Council

4.22 The committee sought further information from the department in relation to the National Cultural Policy, specifically how many drafts have been provided to the Minister for Arts the Hon Simon Crean MP, the date when the policy might be released, and whether the policy will reflect the diversity of a 21st Century Australia.²⁰

4.23 The committee asked officers from the Australia Council to explain literary funding specifically in relation to *Quadrant*. The committee heard that *Quadrant* received \$20 000 in funding for 2012-13, which was 50 per cent less than 2011-12.²¹

4.24 The committee dismissed the following Arts Agencies without questioning due to timing constraints:

- National Film and Sound Archive;
- the National Gallery;
- the National Library;
- the National Museum of Australia; and
- Screen Australia.²²

Office for Sport

4.25 The committee discussed the department's Portfolio Budget Statements in relation to a reduction in funding for the Illicit Drugs In Sport (IDIS) program by \$5.6 million. Mr Eccles, Deputy Secretary told the committee that the funding for the IDIS program was redirected to establish the National Integrity of Sport Unit and the IDIS was never intended to cover testing for illicit drugs in large sports.²³

4.26 The Office for Sport was questioned in relation to the Australian Crime Commission (ACC) Report into *Organised Crime and Drugs in Sport*. The committee sought further information in relation to:

18 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 119.

19 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 121.

20 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, pp 126–133.

21 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 134.

22 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 129.

23 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, pp 137–138.

- the press conference held by the Minister for Sport, Senator the Hon Kate Lundy held with the Minister for Justice, the Hon Jason Clare MP and the various sporting codes chief executive officers on Thursday, 7 February 2013;
- the date of the briefing from the ACC to invited sporting organisations in Canberra;
- whether the government paid for the flights of all sporting codes that attended the press conference; and
- the breath of match fixing in Australian sport.²⁴

4.27 Officers told the committee that the newly established National Integrity of Sport Unit is collaborating with the Australian Crime Commission and the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority to implement components arising out of Project Aperiio and the report into *Organised Crime and Drugs in Sport*.²⁵

4.28 The Australian Sports Commission was dismissed without questioning due to timing constraints.²⁶

Senator Glenn Sterle
Chair

24 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, pp 138–144.

25 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 138.

26 *Estimates Hansard*, 12 February 2013, p. 140.

Appendix 1

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Tabled Documents

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Documents tabled at hearing on Monday, 11 February 2013

1. Successful projects in 2011-12 and 2012-13, tabled by Mr Paul Morris, Executive Director, Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, 11/02/13
2. Correspondence from the Parliamentary Library to Senator Back regarding Professor Ross Garnaut's speech at the National Development and Reform Commission–State Information Centre Carbon Market Beijing International Workshop. Tabled by Senator Back, 11/02/13
3. 'A Premier's Perspective', *The Advocate*, 31 January 2013. Tabled by Senator Colbeck, 11/02/13
4. Review of Commonwealth Fisheries Management Legislation. Tabled by Senator Whish-Wilson, 11/02/13
5. Senate Estimates brief 'Snails in Grain'. Tabled by Mr Matthew Koval, Acting First Assistant Secretary, Agricultural Productivity, 11/02/13

Infrastructure and Transport portfolio

Document tabled at the hearing on Tuesday, 12 February 2013

1. 'Traffic Information Broadcast by aircraft procedures implemented between 1 July 2009 and 10 January 2013'. Tabled by Ms Margaret Staib, Chief Executive Officer, Airservices Australia, 12/02/13
2. 'Time to act on Sydney's aviation capacity', media release by the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP. Tabled by Mr Mike Mrdak, Secretary, Department of Infrastructure and Transport, 12/02/13

Appendix 3

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