

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

1.1 On 9 May 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 expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2013;
- particulars of certain proposed expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2013; and
- particulars of proposed supplementary expenditure for 2011-12.<sup>1</sup>

1.2 The committee was required to report to the Senate on its consideration of 2012-2013 budget estimates on 26 June 2012.

1.3 The committee considered the Portfolio Budget Statements 2012-2013 for the three portfolios at hearings on 21, 22, 23 and 24 May 2012. The hearings were conducted in accordance with the agreed agenda as follows:

- Monday 21 May – Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio.
- Tuesday 22 May – Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio.
- Wednesday 23 May – Infrastructure and Transport portfolio.
- Thursday 24 May – Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport portfolio.

1.4 The committee heard evidence from:

- Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry;
- Senator the Hon Kim Carr, Minister for Human Services representing the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport; and
- 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.

1.5 Evidence was also provided by:

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1 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 89, 9 May 2012, p. 2396.

- Dr Conall O'Connell, 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 before the committee.

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

### **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 resolved that written answers and additional information be submitted by 20 July 2012.

### **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 2012-2013, May 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.

1.9 Answers to questions on notice received from the departments will also be posted on the committee's website at a later date.<sup>2</sup>

### **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.

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2 Answers to questions on notice, once received, will be published at the following website address:  
[http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate\\_Committees?url=rrat\\_ctte/estimates/index.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate_Committees?url=rrat_ctte/estimates/index.htm)