

The Senate

Rural and Regional Affairs
and Transport
Legislation Committee

Budget estimates 2013-14

June 2013

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ISBN 978-1-74229-867-2

This document was prepared by the Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport and printed by the Senate Printing Unit, Department of the Senate, Parliament House, Canberra.

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List of Abbreviations

ABARES	Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences
ACC	Australian Crime Commission
ACERA	Australian Centre of Excellence in Risk Analysis
AECL	Australian Egg Corporation Limited
AFMA	Australian Fisheries Management Authority
ALEC	Australian Livestock Exporters Council
AMSA	Australian Maritime Safety Authority
ANEI	Australian Noise Exposure Index
APVMA	Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority
ARTC	Australian Rail Track Corporation
ASADA	Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority
ATSB	Australian Transport Safety Bureau
AWI	Australian Wool Innovation Limited
BJD	Bovine Johne's Disease
CANSO	Civil Air Navigation Service Organisation
CASA	Civil Aviation Safety Authority
CDDA	Scheme for Compensation for Detriment caused by Defective Administration
CIQ	Customs, Immigration and Quarantine
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
ESCAS	Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System
GRDC	Grain Research and Development Corporation
IER	Industry Equalisation Reserves
LiveCorp	Australian Livestock Export Corporation Limited
MCU	Major Cities Unit
MLA	Meat and Livestock Australia

MYEFO	Mid-Year Economic Fiscal Outlook
NASAG	National Airports Safeguarding Advisory Group
NRAC	National Rural Advisory Council
NRS	National Residue Survey
QDAFF	Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Regional Australia	Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport
RDA	Regional Development Australia committees
RFA	Regional Forest Agreements
RIRDC	Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation
SCoPI	Standing Council on Primary Industries
SEWPaC	Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities
STCW	Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping conventions

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 On 14 May 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 2014 [Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2013-14]; and
- particulars of certain proposed expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2014 [Appropriation Bill (No.2) 2013-14].¹

1.2 The committee is required to report to the Senate on its consideration of 2013-14 Budget Estimates on 25 June 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.

1.4 On 15 May 2013, the Senate amended the continuing order relating to the allocation of departments and agencies to committees.² The change of allocations reflected the Prime Minister's announcement regarding ministerial responsibility of the Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport portfolio.³

Budget Estimates hearings

1.5 The committee considered the Portfolio Budget Statements 2013-14 for all portfolios at hearings between 27 and 30 May 2013. The hearings were conducted in accordance with the agreed agenda as follows:

- Monday 27 and Tuesday 28 May – Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry;
- Wednesday 29 May – Infrastructure and Transport; and

1 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 144, 14 May 2013, p. 3914.

2 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 145, 15 May 2013, p. 3929.

3 The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Prime Minister of Australia, 'Changes to the Ministry', Media release, 25 March 2013, www.pm.gov.au/press-office/changes-ministry-2 (accessed 3 June 2013).

- Thursday 30 May – Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport.

1.6 The committee heard evidence from:

- Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry;
- Senator the Hon Matt Thistlethwaite, Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs representing the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport and the Minister for Road Safety; 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 Development and Local Government, Minister for Regional Services, Local Communities and Territories, and the Minister for the Arts.

1.7 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;
- 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 Mr Metcalfe, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry informed the committee in his opening statement on 27 May 2013 of planned changes to the department's structure, which will occur from 1 July 2013.

1.10 On 1 July 2013, two new branches will be established within the Governance Division under the responsibility of Deputy Secretary, Mr Mark Tucker. The Strategic Policy Branch will be established to provide a long-term view across the agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries. The Office of the Chief Lawyer is also being established after Mr Metcalfe commissioned an independent review of DAFF's legal capability shortly after commencing as secretary. The review found that DAFF would

be better served by redirecting some of its external legal expenditure to enhance its in-house legal capability.⁴

1.11 Mr Metcalfe also advised the committee of his decision not to go through with the planned merger of the Agricultural Productivity, Sustainable Resource Management and Climate Change Divisions, which was identified at Additional Estimates in February 2013, stating that:

Having now looked at the issues more closely...it is not the right time for a major restructure across those policy divisions given the amount of work that is underway.⁵

1.12 Mr Mrdak, Secretary of the Department of Infrastructure and Transport, informed the committee of a change to the department's structure in his opening statement on Wednesday, 29 May 2013, which has occurred since Additional estimates of February 2013.

1.13 The Major Cities Unit (MCU) has been merged with the Policy and Research Division, which occurred as a result of Ms Ekelund's decision to leave the department.⁶ Mr Collett, General Manager of the MCU, later told the committee that the merger of the MCU into the Policy and Research Division provides an additional senior executive service officer to support the work of unit.⁷

Questions on notice

1.14 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 26 July 2013.

Additional information

1.15 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 Budget Estimates 2013-14 May 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.

4 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, pp 6–7.

5 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 6.

6 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, p. 4.

7 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, pp 127–128.

1.16 Answers to questions on notice received from the departments will also be posted on the committee's website at a later date.⁸

Note on references

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

8 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

2.1 This chapter contains the key issues discussed during the 2013-14 Budget Estimates hearings for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio. A complete list of all the topics discussed, and relevant Hansard page numbers, can be found at appendix 3.

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

2.2 The committee heard evidence from the department and agencies on Monday 27 and Tuesday 28 May 2013. The hearing was conducted in the following order:

- Finance and Business Support; Government; Information Services; and People and Service Delivery;
- Interim Inspector-General of Biosecurity;
- Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer; and Animal Health Australia;
- Biosecurity—Animal Division; and Live Animal Exports Division;
- Meat and Livestock Australia; and Australian Livestock Export Corporation Limited;
- Border Compliance; and Post Entry Quarantine Program;
- Biosecurity—Plant;
- Food;
- Biosecurity—Policy Division;
- Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation;
- Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences;
- Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority;
- Australian Fisheries Management Authority;
- Sustainable Resource Management;
- Australian Wool Innovation Limited;
- Climate Change;
- Australian Egg Corporation Limited;
- Grains Research and Development Corporation;
- Agricultural Productivity; and
- Trade and Market Access.

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

2.3 DAFF's Secretary, Mr Andrew Metcalfe, informed the committee during his opening statement of the recommendations from the Australian Public Service Commission Capability Review of the department led by Dr Sue Vardon AO, Dr John Stocker AO and Dr David Gruen. The key findings of the review were:

- to further strengthen its capabilities in relation to being a policy leader responsive to the government of the day;
- be client focused with a modern service delivery approach;
- be proactive in programs that protect the animal, plant and human health status of Australia;
- improve the productivity of portfolio industries;
- be innovative in its approach to business and ICT systems; and
- be a source of easily accessible public information through effective communication.¹

2.4 The committee congratulated the department and the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig for providing answers to questions on notice from Additional Estimates of February 2013 by the due date.²

2.5 The committee asked officers to explain how the National Food Plan is going to be funded, as the plan was announced by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig after the Budget on 25 May 2013. Officers told the committee that:

The Food Plan delivers about \$42 million in new initiatives, most of which sit within this portfolio... the department will be receiving \$37.42 million and some of the initiatives will be absorbed by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. Together they amount to \$42 million.³

2.6 In continuing interest from previous estimates hearings, the committee sought an update on the average number of unscheduled absences taken by staff.⁴ Ms Lynne O'Brien, First Assistant Secretary, told the committee that the department 'is currently tracking at 15.1 days' unscheduled absences per employee, per annum.⁵ At Additional

1 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 5.

2 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, p. 4.

3 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 7.

4 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 9.

5 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 9.

Estimates in February 2013 the committee heard that the mean number of unscheduled absences was 15.2 days, which is a reduction of 0.1 days.⁶

2.7 Ms O'Brien further explained that the department:

...have a relatively small proportion of staff that utilise a lot of leave. What we have found is that 50 per cent of our leave is taken by 15 per cent of our staff.⁷

2.8 The committee also discussed the following topics:

- staffing reductions;
- the relocation of equipment;
- performance measures applied to the department's International Engagement Team;
- the number of claims lodged under the Scheme for Compensation for Detriment caused by Defective Administration (CDDA); and
- changes to the export licencing fees.⁸

Interim Inspector-General of Biosecurity

2.9 The committee asked whether the work plan undertaken by the Interim Inspector-General of Biosecurity is at the request of the minister or if it's developed in consultation with stakeholders. Dr Kevin Dunn, Interim Inspector-General of Biosecurity, explained that the work program is developed in consultation with the department and industry groups such as Plant Health Australia and Animal Health Australia. Mr Metcalfe added that the interim Inspector-General of Biosecurity is 'focused on an assurance process around the department's decision making relating to biosecurity issues'.⁹

2.10 The Interim Inspector-General of Biosecurity's current work program includes the following projects:

- an audit of the biosecurity risk management measures for the importation of uncooked and cooked pig meat;
- an assessment of the performance of biosecurity risk management measures for the importation of animal breeding material; and
- an audit of the biosecurity risk management measures for international mail and air cargo with a particular focus on online buying.¹⁰

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

7 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 9.

8 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, pp 12–17.

9 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, pp 17–18.

10 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, pp 17–18.

Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer and Animal Health Australia

2.11 The committee discussed Bovine Johne's Disease and the involvement of the Australian Government with the current outbreak in Queensland. Dr Bob Biddle, Acting Chief Veterinary Officer, told the committee that the National Johne's Disease Control Program includes all states and territories as well as the sheep and cattle industries. The program was designed to assist industry to limit the spread of and impacts of the disease nationally and is managed by Animal Health Australia.¹¹

2.12 Officers provided an update regarding the number of properties affected by the outbreak Bovine Johne's Disease:

Initially there were approximately 150 properties in Queensland and 35 interstate that received live cattle from the original infected property... 53 in Queensland, are under state or territory government quarantine and movement restrictions while we undergo investigations and tracings... in the Northern Territory there were initially 11. It is down to about one property remaining that is still under restriction while we undergo further investigations... in WA there were initially about 14 and that has been reduced to the point where we have one actual detection in one bull, which is being managed between the Commonwealth and state governments.¹²

2.13 The committee asked Animal Health Australia to explain the compensation scheme available through the National Johne's Disease Control Program. Dr Michael Bond, Chief Executive Officer, told the committee that individual cattle producers can apply for assistance through the Financial and Non-Financial Assistance Package, which is capped at \$11 000. Dr Bond added that the financial assistance package 'was reduced to \$11 000 because there was concern about the available funds being exhausted'.¹³

2.14 The committee discussed the current issue of starving cattle in Queensland and whether they should be allowed to graze in national parks, which was reported in *The Weekend Australian* on 25 May 2013.¹⁴ The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig told the committee that:

...animal welfare is principally and primarily a state responsibility... Minister McVeigh...declared a drought in that area and state assistance has been provided... if you come back to the national park issue...I am not responsible for national parks but I certainly do take an interest through SCoPI, which is the Standing Council on Primary Industries.¹⁵

11 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 21.

12 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 21.

13 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 25.

14 *The Weekend Australian*, 'Cruel truths hit home as cattle export ban, bushfires and drought wreak devastating toll', 25 May 2013, pp 1, 4–5.

15 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 30.

2.15 The committee sought an update on the review of the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock. Dr Biddle told the committee that:

...the livestock industry and the livestock export industry are actively involved in the review process and their submission are being actively considered, as to the outcome, well, I cannot speculate about that.¹⁶

2.16 The committee also discussed the following topics:

- strain typing of the Bovine Johne's Disease;
- Lyssa virus;
- Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for cattle and sheep; and
- Hendra virus.¹⁷

Biosecurity—Animal Division and Live Animal Exports Division

2.17 The committee asked the department whether it had carried out an assessment regarding the cause of the apparent oversupply of cattle in Queensland. Mr Phillip Glyde, Deputy Secretary, told the committee that:

...we have not done an assessment of that nature in terms of what are the various sources of the problem of oversupply of animals in that particular region. What we have relied on is the advice from QDAFF and AgForce who estimate that around...three million head of cattle are affected by drought conditions. We have been relying on those two organisations to keep us up to date in relation to the animal welfare issues.¹⁸

2.18 The committee asked officers to explain whether a Memorandum of Understanding had been signed with China regarding the trade of live cattle. Mr Glyde informed the committee that 'we currently trade with China...in dairy cattle animals'.¹⁹ Mr Andrew Cupit added:

...we have traded in breeders to China and that has been established for quite a while... for slaughter cattle there have been ongoing discussions over a number of years but there is no protocol at this stage... we have with ALEC, the Australian Livestock Exporters' Council, ongoing meetings with them twice a year and in between to determine the priority status for different markets... slaughter cattle for China are not in the top one or two priorities.²⁰

16 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 27.

17 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, pp 22–25 and 27–28.

18 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 31.

19 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 35.

20 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, pp 35–36.

2.19 Mr Metcalfe explained the level one priorities for market access that the department are currently being pursuing:

We work with the Australian Livestock Exporters Council's (ALEC) protocol committee to establish the priorities for market access area. The last meeting of that committee happened in Fremantle on 14 November last year. The priorities are as follows. Priority 1 is Cambodia cattle breeder and feeder, then China with the PRC breeder cattle, and the third breeder cattle to Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus.²¹

2.20 The committee discussed the Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System (ESCAS) and alleged breaches of animal welfare. Mr Glyde reminded the committee that exporters are responsible for providing assurances that the animals in their supply chain are treated in accordance with international animal welfare standards. The department is responsible for monitoring and supervising the ESCAS system.²²

2.21 The committee sought an update on the current investigation into footage alleging Australian cattle were mistreated in Egyptian abattoirs. The footage aired on 6 May 2013 on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's 7:30 program.²³ Mr Glyde told the committee:

...there have been a number of claims made by the people who brought forward the information, Animals Australia, and a number of other claims have been made. We are currently investigating that and I would not want to speculate at this stage.²⁴

2.22 The committee also discussed the following topics:

- the health of animals being transported through Australia for live animal export;
- funding allocated for overseas development aid programs;
- an update on the investigation relating to the alleged incident of animal cruelty on Bahrain-Pakistan ship; and
- the reallocation of funding for the animal biosecurity and response reform program.²⁵

21 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, pp 37–38.

22 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 40.

23 *Australian Broadcasting Corporation 7:30*, 'Cattle cruelty footage suspends trade, sparks live export debate', 6 May 2013, www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2013/s3753039.htm, (accessed 12 June 2013).

24 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 43.

25 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, pp 30–31 and 39–42.

Meat and Livestock Australia and Australian Livestock Export Corporation Limited

2.23 The committee inquired into the 2013-14 budget positions of Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) and Australian Livestock Export Corporation Limited (LiveCorp). Mr Scott Hansen, Managing Director, told the committee that at the moment MLA's budget for 2013-14 remains relatively unchanged from 2012-13 in terms of income and expenditure forecasts.²⁶ Mr Malcolm Foster, Acting Chairman and Director, told the committee that LiveCorp's budget for 2013-14 '...is forecast to be slightly higher than this financial year'.²⁷

2.24 The committee asked officers to explain MLA's role in free trade agreements, specifically in relation to China and South Korea. Mr Hansen explained that MLA are active in conducting market analysis on the likely impact on the competitiveness of Australian beef for the following scenarios:

- should Australia sign an free trade agreement;
- should Australia not sign an free trade agreement; and
- should Australia's competitors sign a free trade agreement.²⁸

2.25 Mr Hansen provided the committee with following example regarding the likely impact on Australian beef as a result of South Korea signing a free trade agreement with the United States of America:

...we have been able to analyse the figures to show that if we do not get a free trade agreement in place with Korea before the end of this year we will see the US move to an eight per cent tariff differential by the start of 2014... That eight per cent tariff differential, on our modelling, says that it will cost us around \$28 million in lost market share to the Americans because of that price differential.²⁹

2.26 The committee sought an update from LiveCorp in relation to re-engaging with Saudi Arabia under the ESCAS system. Mr Sam Brown, Chief Executive Officer, told the committee that:

The bulk of our effort with...Saudi Arabia is being delivered through our peak council, ALEC, who are working closely with the department on raising and managing issues that have been raised.³⁰

26 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 46.

27 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 54.

28 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 48.

29 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 48.

30 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 54.

2.27 The committee enquired about live exports to Vietnam. Mr Brown explained that Vietnam is a market of interest for LiveCorp, as it offers opportunities for modest market growth within the Asian region.³¹

2.28 The committee also discussed the following topics:

- Indonesia's long-term plan around self-sufficiency;
- the growth of live exports compared to chilled box; and
- genetically modified-free feed for cattle.³²

Border Compliance and Post Entry Quarantine Program

2.29 The committee discussed the movement and balances of the Industry Equalisation Reserves (IER). Mr Tim Chapman, First Assistant Secretary, told the committee that the \$10 million deficit recorded for the import operation reserve was due to the last fee increase occurring in July 2009.³³ Mr Darren Schaeffer, Chief Finance Officer, added:

...over time the program will dip into deficit with the expectation that we will recoup that when we reset the fees on average over a period of time.³⁴

2.30 The committee asked whether the IER IT system, BICON, was on schedule for completion in June 2013. Officers told the committee that the completion date had been revised, as another 12 months work is required before the department will have a fully functioning system ready to roll out.³⁵

2.31 The committee sought information regarding the funding of the BICON system. Officers explained that funding is split with 75 per cent being funded by cost recovery from the industry through the import operations reserve. The remaining 25 per cent will be funded by a Commonwealth appropriation. Mr Chapman went on to explain:

Under cost recovery guidelines it is considered appropriate that the users of the service pay for all the associated functions...that are required to support that service. BICON is a system which will very much be in existence to support importers and to support the delivery of biosecurity services to importers.³⁶

2.32 Ms Rona Mellor, Deputy Secretary told the committee the object of BICON system is for an importer to be able to apply, pay and receive approval for a permit

31 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 54.

32 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, pp 49–54.

33 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 56.

34 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 57.

35 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 58.

36 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 58.

online. Currently importers must interact with the department to apply for a permit, as the department's e-permit and e-lodgement systems are email based.³⁷

2.33 Continuing its interest from previous estimates hearings, the committee discussed the proposed design and development of a new post-entry quarantine facility in Mickleham, Victoria. Officers told the committee that the Joint Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works recommended in its *Report 2/2013 – Referrals made February to April 2013* for construction of the new post-entry quarantine facility to commence in late 2013.³⁸

2.34 The committee also discussed the following topics:

- the Bovine Johne's Disease protocol;
- changes to certificates for the export of box meat into China;
- the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy;
- the risk of disease posed by raw marinated prawns imported into Australia; and
- managing biosecurity risks associated with an increase of cruise ship passengers.³⁹

Biosecurity—Plant

2.35 The committee asked officers to explain the current review to allow the importation of fresh table grapes from California into Western Australia. Officers told the committee, in response to the release of the *Draft Non-Regulated Analysis of Existing Policy for Californian Table Grapes to Western Australia*, 13 submissions were received and as at 27 May 2013 were being assessed. Dr Vanessa Findlay, Chief Plant Protection Officer, told the committee that the next step is for the final report to be produced, which will recommend whether the importation of Californian table grapes into Western Australia should commence.⁴⁰

2.36 The committee discussed the National Fruit Fly strategy. Dr Findlay, gave the committee the following update:

Previously I had advised that we were working towards the establishment of the governance body, which is the group that would oversight the implementation of the fruit fly strategy and the action plan that sits underneath that. We have been working towards that, led by Plant Health Australia, and all state and territory governments and the Australian government have reached agreement on what contribution they would

37 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 60.

38 Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, *Report 2/2013 – Referrals made February to April 2013*, May 2013, pp 11–20.

39 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, pp 65, 70–78.

40 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, pp 79–80.

make. Unfortunately, we have been unsuccessful to date in getting agreement from the industries as to how they would participate and what contribution they would make to that governance body.⁴¹

2.37 The committee asked for an update regarding the importation of New Zealand apples into Australia. Ms Louise van Meurs, Assistant Secretary, told the committee that, as of 21 May 2013, there were four permits to import apples from New Zealand and no shipments had been received. The season is expected to run from May through to October.⁴²

2.38 The committee also discussed the following topics:

- the importation of roses from South America;
- the horticulture register establishment;
- sterile insect technology; and
- horticulture export program costs.⁴³

Food

2.39 The committee discussed the allegation of high bacteria levels in long-life milk imported into Hong Kong. Officers told the committee that the Hong Kong Centre for Food Safety had tested the milk and identified a high bacteria count. Mr Read, First Assistant Secretary, added that the department was making enquiries with the processor, exporter and the Western Australia Department of Health to gain further information about what may have affected the product's shelf life.⁴⁴

2.40 The committee discussed the National Residue Survey (NRS) and its relationship with FreshTest data. Mr Read explained that FreshTest data is commercially collected data whereas the NRS is a specific survey of data addressing the need of the importing country. He further stated that:

...internationally, because of tradition, custom and practice, and for a range of other reasons, it is extremely difficult to get those international governments to accept the independence of data other than what is collected in a very transparent way by an agency such as NRS.⁴⁵

2.41 The committee also discussed the following topics:

- the status of onions within the National Residue Survey;

41 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 80.

42 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, pp 80–81.

43 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, pp 80–81, 82, 85 and 87–89.

44 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 93.

45 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 95.

- the status of reforms, efficiencies, cost savings and red tape reductions for non-European Union and American cold stores;
- the outcome of the containers of frozen beef that were not accepted into Indonesia and left on a wharf in Jakarta, Indonesia; and
- bilingual certificates with China.⁴⁶

Biosecurity—Policy Division

2.42 The committee heard that the department is currently reviewing the Biosecurity Surveillance, Incident Response and Tracing (BioSIRT) program. BioSIRT is used for the collection of information in relation to national incidences. Ms Mellor explained that:

Over time, the feedback from the states and territories in relation to the software has been that it is quite clunky and is not serving their needs. The states and territories and the Commonwealth have come to an agreement to look for a new IT solution. This has been agreed through the primary industry standing council and the ministerial council.⁴⁷

2.43 The committee discussed the department's import risk analysis process, the risk estimation matrix and advice from the Australian Centre of Excellence in Risk Analysis (ACERA) in relation to Mr Peace's report titled *Advice on the risk estimation matrix used by DAFB Biosecurity as part of the Import Risk Analysis process*.⁴⁸ ACERA's advice commented critically on the information provided to the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee by Mr Peace.⁴⁹

2.44 Dr Findlay explained to the committee, the risk estimation matrix methods used in the United States, Canada, the European Union and New Zealand compared to Australia's current system stating:

...The key difference with the New Zealand method is that they do not use a matrix to combine likelihood and consequence assessments. Similarly, in the US they have a different way of bringing together the separate events that must occur for consequences to arise. In Canada, it is the same. Canada's assessments are probably the most like ours, but they do not use a transparent method for combining likelihood and consequence.⁵⁰

46 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, pp 94, 96–97, 99 and 100–102.

47 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 102.

48 The Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee sought independent, specialist advice in relation to the risk estimation matrix for its inquiries regarding the importation of pineapples from Malaysia, potatoes from New Zealand and fresh ginger from Fiji. Mr Peace's report can be accessed via www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate_Committees?url=rrat_ctte/pineapples_2012/peace_report/index.htm.

49 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, pp 103–105.

50 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 104.

Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation

2.45 The committee asked the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) to outline its budget position for 2013-14 compared to 2012-13. Mr Craig Burns, Managing Director, told the committee that:

There is virtually no change between the two years. We went from total income in the last financial year of \$23.1 million to this coming year of \$23.3 million... The only significant changes are around the levies income, which has seen a slight increase with the increased production of rice. Expenditure will stay very much the same as the current year.⁵¹

2.46 The committee discussed RIRDC's proposal to introduce a levy in the thoroughbred industry. Officers explained that a horse industry program has existed for many years, which was based on voluntary contributions that RIRDC matched. RIRDC is proposing a levy on the thoroughbred industry that is matched by Commonwealth funding, which would provide greater certainty of funding. Mr Burns told the committee that the thoroughbred industry is yet to vote on the proposal however, feedback indicates consultations are progressing well.⁵²

2.47 The committee inquired whether RIRDC has looked at alternative uses for plantation timber due to the apparent failure of tree farms and the managed investment scheme. Officers told the committee that there is not a current program looking at trees on farms, rather RIRDC has a program focused on Northern Tasmania. Mr Burns explained that the program is looking at structural change within the region and industry options and potential growth in new industries.⁵³

Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences

2.48 In continuing its interest from previous estimates hearings, the committee sought an update on wild dog management. Mr Paul Morris, Executive Director, told the committee that Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) is currently working on a report, which will encompass the economic impacts of wild dogs and the psychological effect it has on farm families. As of 14 June 2013 the report has not been published.⁵⁴

2.49 Ms Lisa Elliston, Assistant Secretary, added:

ABARES is also working on [a] related project to wild dogs titled 'Wild dog management in Australia—a landscape approach including people, pests and place. That is a project that is examining the appropriateness and the capacity of public and private stakeholders to adopt a collective action

51 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 113.

52 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 113.

53 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 113.

54 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 114.

model to improve wild dog management in Australia. That is a project that is ongoing and is not scheduled to finish until 2014.⁵⁵

2.50 The committee enquired into how ABARES' produces the estimates for Australian wheat crops. Mr Morris told the committee:

I think the approach we take is using the best possible information we can use in coming up with those forecasts and collecting as much on-the-ground information as we can get. But we are constantly reviewing how we go about doing it and trying to introduce new information and new techniques to try to improve the way that we do our forecasting.⁵⁶

2.51 The committee asked whether ABARES is conducting research on the effect the collapse of managed investment schemes has had on projected supply of plantation timber. Mr Morris told the committee:

In terms of plantation numbers...our previous figures obviously show the quite significant decline in new plantation areas over the last few years. That is going to be reflected in terms of wood supply going forward.⁵⁷

2.52 The committee also discussed the following topics:

- the impact of climate change on Commonwealth fisheries;
- productivity forecasts and the effect of climate change;
- Western Australia's marine heatwave and effect on fisheries; and
- Multiperil crop insurance.⁵⁸

Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority

2.53 In continuing its interest from previous estimates hearings, the committee sought an update on the suspension of fenthion. Dr Raj Bhula, Program Manager Pesticides, told the committee that Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) anticipates receiving residue tests in June or July 2013, which will be incorporated into an occupational health and safety report and an environmental assessment to be published in late 2013.⁵⁹

2.54 The committee enquired about the risk posed to operators who use the chemical trisulfin. Dr Allen Bryce, Program Manager Veterinary Medicines, told the committee that the Office of Chemical Safety within the Department of Health and Ageing assessed the occupational health and safety risks and recommended that

55 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 115.

56 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 116.

57 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, p. 117.

58 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2013, pp 119–124.

59 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, p. 5.

trisulfin was safe to use. The committee heard that there have been reports of operators suffering headaches from using trisulfin and Dr Bryce explained:

...we have unable to establish any casual connection between the use of the product and the symptoms that were shown. Very few cases have been reported.⁶⁰

2.55 The committee asked about the process for registering chemicals that pose an unmanageable risk. Mr Matthew Koval, First Assistant Secretary, told the committee that:

The view we have taken about unmanageable risk is that the regulatory framework should look at risk. In any chemical, as the APVMA goes through the assessment process either through the initial assessment, the review or the reregistration process, if there is unmanageable risk then it should not be on the market. By definition if we actually have a strong regulatory framework that actually looks at risks and how to manage those risks, if you cannot manage those risks then the chemical should not be registered.⁶¹

2.56 The committee heard that a review of diuron was completed in November 2012 into noticeable environmental and human health concerns. Dr Bhula explained that the review found in certain situations the approved rate of application for diuron presented an environmental risk. In response to the review, the APVMA has placed restrictions on the use of diuron including introducing a permit system, which will phase-out the chemical already in the supply chain.⁶²

2.57 The committee also discussed the following topics:

- the reform agenda for agricultural veterinary chemicals;
- the re-registration process of chemicals;
- the spray drift problem for broadacre farming;
- the levels of carbendazim allowed in imported juice and concentrate; and
- the use of neonicotinoids.⁶³

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

2.58 The committee asked officers to explain the Australian Fisheries Management Authority's (AFMA) compliance and enforcement policy. Mr Peter Venslovas, General Manager Fisheries Operations, told the committee that the policy outlines the

60 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, p. 6.

61 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, p. 9.

62 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, pp 11–12.

63 *Estimate Hansard*, 28 May 2013, pp 7–8, 11 and 13–17,

approach to take when dealing with non-compliant behaviour ranging from low-level interventions, such as on-the-spot fines, to higher-level interventions, such as prosecutions. An operational management committee determines the intervention level that should be taken in each non-compliant incident.⁶⁴

2.59 In continuing interest from previous estimates hearings, the committee discussed the Borthwick Review. Of particular interest were Mr Borthwick's comments in the review report regarding funding and research gaps. Mr Ian Thompson, First Assistant Secretary, explained that:

...fisheries research is very expensive and in a cost recovered world it really can only be charged to industry if industry is going to do some fishing. So the broad message that Mr Borthwick was pointing out was that there is a problem with exploratory fisheries.⁶⁵

2.60 The committee sought an update on the recorded catch in the following fisheries: the Coral Sea Fishery; and the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery. Dr Nick Rayns, Executive Manager, told the committee that the Coral Sea Fishery operates at a relatively modest level with the recorded catch for 2012-13 (at 28 May 2013) was approximately 20 tonnes. In relation to the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery, the committee heard that the recorded catch so far for the 2013 calendar year (at 28 May 2013) was approximately 59 tonnes. Dr Rayns advised the committee that these figures are provisional.⁶⁶

2.61 The committee asked officers to provide an update on the Abel Tasman now that the two-year ban from fishing in Australian waters has commenced. Mr Thompson told the committee that under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, an expert panel will undertake a scientific assessment of the environmental impact and report their findings by 26 April 2015.⁶⁷

2.62 The committee also discussed the following topics:

- the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation's work regarding fisheries and ecosystem management;
- illegal fishing in the Coral Sea Fishery;
- a Compensation for Detriment caused by Defective Administration claim made about the activities of AFMA in 2009;
- AFMA's complaint to the Press Council; and
- the stereo-video management plan.⁶⁸

64 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, pp 18–19.

65 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, p. 20.

66 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, pp 24–26.

67 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, p. 42.

68 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, pp 21–22, 26–27, 29–30 and 37–39.

Sustainable Resource Management

2.63 The committee discussed the Caring for Our Country program, and sought an update on the progress of separating the responsibilities from the joint team back to the department and the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Populations and Communities (SEWPaC). Mr Thompson told the committee that:

...the two bits that are still jointly managed are Regions and Reef Rescue. That is because we are making payments to those bodies and we are trying to manage them for integrated outcomes. We have moved to what we now call, instead of joint delivery for the whole program, joint governance. We regularly meet with SEWPaC at senior and junior levels to discuss issues that arise and consider things like alignment of programs, how we are running programs and timing and those sorts of things. We also work on a common monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework and try to align things so that material coming in from community groups, regional groups and others can be in a common format and be used in a simple way.⁶⁹

2.64 The committee heard that in the 2013-14 Budget, the Community Landcare Grant Program had \$75 million of its funding over the forward estimates reallocated to other agricultural programs. Mr Thompson explained that despite this reallocation, over the forward estimates a total of \$179 million remains available to fund community Landcare grants, innovation grants, industry partnerships, broader community capacity building and information sharing.⁷⁰

2.65 In continuing its interest from previous estimates hearings, the committee discussed the funding allocated to Australian Feral Camel Management Project. Ms Michelle Lauder, Assistant Secretary, told the committee that the project's budget of \$19 million had been reduced to \$16.6 million, as the program has been hindered by poor weather conditions and is set to conclude in December 2013.⁷¹ The committee heard that since the program commenced in 2009 and as at 28 May 2013, a total of 135 000 camels have been culled.⁷²

2.66 The committee discussed the funding allocated to Caring for our Country regional facilitators. Officials told the committee that each of the 54 regions will receive funding of \$150 000 in 2013-14 with the aim of increasing productivity through adopting sustainable, low-environmental impact management practices.⁷³

69 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, p. 44.

70 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, pp 46–49.

71 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, p. 56.

72 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, p. 56

73 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, p. 60.

Australian Wool Innovation Limited

2.67 Mr Stuart McCullough, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Wool Innovation Limited (AWI) told the committee that Australia currently dominates the world's apparel wool market producing 250 million kilograms of apparel wool or 90 per cent of the market. In comparison, the committee heard New Zealand produces approximately 5 to 7 million kilograms and South Africa produces approximately 7 to 8 million kilograms of apparel wool.⁷⁴

2.68 Officers told the committee that currently China purchases 80 per cent of the Australian wool clip compared to five years ago when they purchased only 60 per cent. Mr McCullough explained:

...The interesting part of that is that half of that 80 per cent is now being consumed in China. So, where once upon a time China used to be a wonderful converter of greasy wool to garments and they were shipped off, now they are still a wonderful converter of greasy wool to garments, but half of that volume is being consumed in China. That is where the opportunity lies.⁷⁵

2.69 The committee asked AWI to outline its research activities. Mr McCullough told the committee that AWI has four main strategies:

- (i) sheep health, welfare and productivity;
- (ii) wool harvesting;
- (iii) environmental climate change and carbon; and
- (iv) education extension.⁷⁶

Climate Change

2.70 The committee asked officials questions relating to the recently finalised Tasmanian Forests Agreement. Funding was provided to five Commonwealth government departments (including DAFF) to implement various activities as part of the agreement. Officials explained that the Tasmanian Government is responsible for developing program guidelines and administering funding, and that SEWPaC is the lead Commonwealth agency. On several occasions questions were referred to SEWPaC on the basis that it is taking the Commonwealth lead on the agreement.⁷⁷

2.71 The committee asked for an update of the Regional Forest Agreements reviews being conducted in Tasmania, Western Australia, Victoria and New South Wales. Mr Paul McNamara, Assistant Secretary, explained that:

74 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, p. 51.

75 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, p. 50.

76 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, p. 51.

77 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, pp 71–74.

...the opportunity is now there for us to move forward with a third five-yearly review of the Tasmanian RFA... we can also start developing the terms of the third five-yearly review in terms of appointing an independent reviewer... we have a signed scoping agreement now with Western Australia to undertake the first and second five-yearly reviews of the Western Australian RFA... the Australian government and Victorian government joint response is now back with the Victorian government and we expect that to be finalised fairly soon. Similarly, we are in the last stages of discussion with the New South Wales government on the second five-yearly review.⁷⁸

2.72 The committee discussed the Rural Financial Counselling Service Program and the additional funding of \$5.9 million to create 16 new positions, which were announced in the 2013-14 Budget. Ms Anna Wilcock, Acting Assistant Secretary, explained that the new rural financial counsellors will initially be located in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia.⁷⁹

2.73 The committee also heard that a trial of the Rural Financial Counselling Service Program is currently underway in the Northern Territory. Ms Fran Freeman, First Assistant Secretary, explained that additional funding has been provided to the South Australian provider to deliver rural financial counselling services in the Northern Territory over the next 12 months.⁸⁰

2.74 The committee asked whether the Rural Financial Counselling Service Program would be extended to provide services that address the emotional and personal relationship needs of communities. Ms Freeman explained that:

...what we are actually trying to do now is to make sure that the social services that are provided in rural and remote areas are actually able to go where they are needed most. One of the efforts that we have got as a linchpin...of the drought package is to do this better.⁸¹

2.75 The committee discussed the Farm Businesses Package, which forms part of the broader Farm Finance Program. The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig told the committee that the Farm Businesses Package has been designed to provide \$30 million annually over the next two years to each of the states and the Northern Territory. Concessional loans of up to \$650 000 will be available to support eligible farm businesses restructure debt or fund projects to enhance productivity.⁸² The committee heard that as at 28 May 2013, no state or

78 Estimates Hansard, 28 May 2013, p. 75.

79 Estimates Hansard, 28 May 2013, p. 77.

80 Estimates Hansard, 28 May 2013, pp 77–78.

81 Estimates Hansard, 28 May 2013, p. 81.

82 Estimates Hansard, 28 May 2013, pp 86–87.

territory government had agreed in principle to sign up to the Farm Businesses Package.⁸³

2.76 The committee also discussed the following topics:

- the Carbon Farming Futures Program;
- the Queensland Government's apparent rescinding of the South-East Queensland Forest Agreement; and
- illegal logging regulations.⁸⁴

Australian Egg Corporation Limited

2.77 The committee discussed the Hen Welfare Research, Development and Extension Forum held in early May 2013. Mr James Kellaway, Chief Executive Officer, told the committee that the forum was held so that stakeholders could discuss and provide input into the research and industry standards and guidelines. The forum was attended by the egg-producing community including research scientists, animal welfare agencies and government regulators.⁸⁵

2.78 The committee sought an update in relation to what action is being taken regarding the free range labelling issue. Mr Kellaway explained that consumer research has been commissioned to identify shifts in buyer demands and concerns regarding the labelling of free range eggs.⁸⁶

Grains Research and Development Corporation

2.79 The committee asked officials to outline the Grains Research and Development Corporation's (GRDC) budget position for 2012-13 and 2013-14. Mr John Harvey, Managing Director told the committee that for 2012-13, the GRDC is expected to record a surplus of \$24 million. In relation to its budget for 2013-14, the GRDC is expected to record a deficit of \$11.7 million.⁸⁷

2.80 The committee heard that the GRDC invests across the following six themes:

- (i) market requirements;
- (ii) improve crop yields;
- (iii) protecting the crop;
- (iv) sustainable and profitable farming systems;

83 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, p. 89.

84 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, p. 99–103.

85 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, pp 103–104.

86 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, pp 104–105.

87 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, pp 106–107.

- (v) maintaining the resource base; and
- (vi) capacity building in the research and grower communities.⁸⁸

Agricultural Productivity

2.81 The committee sought further information regarding the National Food Plan, which was released on 25 May 2013 by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig. The following aspects of the National Food Plan were discussed:

- departmental and administered funding;
- timeframes for projects to be completed;
- grants program administration;
- Asian Food Markets Research Fund;
- the role of the Australian Food and Beverage Supplier Advocate;
- the branding of products exported;
- the community food initiative; and
- the establishment of a register for foreign owned agricultural land.⁸⁹

2.82 The committee discussed the outcomes from research and development funding. Mr Koval explained that the department and ABARES are in the process of reviewing the benefits and return on funding the research and development system. The committee heard that the department's eligible research and development programs will match funding of approximately \$239 million in 2013-14.⁹⁰

2.83 The committee asked whether the department had conducted any work in identifying agricultural industries that are experiencing labour shortages. Mr Michael Ryan, Acting Assistant Secretary, told the committee that:

...at this point in time there is no systematic work to capture that. We have been discussing it as part of the forward work program. You might be aware that NRAC, the National Rural Advisory Council, was recently doing some work on labour and skills. They are reporting to the minister soon... It is looking across a broad range of issues around labour. The particular focus of the study is on the capacity of the agricultural sector to plan their employment needs and undertake workforce planning, and part of that is looking at the range of sources for labour.⁹¹

88 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, p. 107.

89 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, pp 110–118 and 127–128.

90 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, p. 120.

91 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, p. 121.

Trade and Market Access

2.84 The committee asked officials to provide an update regarding SPC Ardmona's application for emergency assistance. The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig told the committee that he has referred the matter to the Minister for Trade and Competiveness, the Hon Dr Craig Emerson MP and the Minister for Industry and Innovation, the Hon Greg Combet AM MP.⁹²

2.85 Ms Jo Evans, First Assistant Secretary, explained the process now that the minister has referred SPC Ardmona's request for emergency assistance. The decision lies with the Minister for Trade and Competiveness to determine if he agrees with SPC Ardmona's request for emergency assistance. A decision is then required from the Treasurer to refer it to the relevant authority, which in the case of SPC Ardmona's request it would be the Productivity Commission.⁹³

2.86 The committee discussed overseas development assistance funding of the following programs for 2013-14:

- International Agricultural Cooperation Program;
- the Regional Animal Biosecurity Program; and
- the Improved Animal Welfare Program.⁹⁴

2.87 The committee sought a progress report on the status of the Australia-South Korea free trade agreement, as Mr Hansen stated during Meat and Livestock's appearance (paragraph 2.25 refers) that Australia is disadvantaged now that South Korea has signed a free trade agreement with the United States of America. Ms Evans told the committee that with the election of President Park Geun-hye in February 2013, the South Korean administration has listed a free trade agreement with Australia as one of the President's foreign policy priorities.⁹⁵

2.88 Ms Evans went on to state that:

...we are certainly very aware of the significant impact it is having on our beef industry, in particular. We have very high applied tariffs in Korea. For beef and offal they can be as high as 72 per cent. These are really significant numbers, and we are fully aware of the need to have an agreement with Korea that puts us both on a competitive footing with the US.⁹⁶

92 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, p. 123.

93 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, p. 123.

94 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, p. 133.

95 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, p. 129.

96 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, pp 129–130.

2.89 The committee asked officials if they were concerned about not having a free trade agreement with South Korea, China and Japan. Mr Metcalfe explained that despite the absence of free trade agreements, over the last six months there has been an increase in boxed beef exports to China and Indonesia. He also stated that officials are working to maintain the market share and access of Australian agricultural products.⁹⁷

2.90 The committee also discussed the following topics:

- improvements that can be made to the department's working relationship with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade;
- the issue of the Samsung Techwin self-propelled howitzer; and
- the food standards in Japan.⁹⁸

97 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, p. 131.

98 *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2013, pp 132 and 134–135.

Chapter 3

Infrastructure and Transport portfolio

3.1 This chapter contains the key issues discussed during the 2013-14 Budget Estimates hearings for the Infrastructure and Transport portfolio. A complete list of all the topics discussed, and relevant Hansard page numbers, can be found at appendix 4.

Department of Infrastructure and Transport

3.2 The committee heard evidence from the Infrastructure and Transport Department (the department) on Wednesday, 29 May 2013. The hearing was conducted in the following order:

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

Corporate Services

3.3 The committee asked the department to provide an indication of when the government's response to the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Reference Committee's *Aviation Accident Investigations* report, which was tabled in the Senate on 23 May 2013, will be provided. The committee is mindful that the three month time period for government responses, as outlined in Senate Resolution 42(1)¹, will fall during the upcoming caretaker period.²

3.4 The Secretary, Mr Mike Mrdak told the committee:

1 *Senate Standing Orders and other orders of the Senate*, June 2009, Procedural Orders and Resolutions of the Senate of Continuing Effect 42.

2 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, p. 4.

...I am not in a position here today to give you an exact time frame as to when the minister and government will formally respond to the report... we are all very conscious of the fact that with the date of the federal election being proposed for 14 September and caretaker mode notionally starting on around 12 August that would fall within the normal three-month period. I can only say to you that the government is giving this serious and urgent consideration and looking to expedite its response as best it can.³

3.5 The committee sought an explanation from the department as to why answers to questions on notice from Additional Estimates were provided seven weeks late. Mr Mrdak advised the committee that the department did not meet its timeframes to provide draft responses to the minister's office.⁴

3.6 The committee discussed the rate of unscheduled absences amongst staff. Officers advised that the average rate of unscheduled absences to 30 June 2012 was 14 days per full-time equivalent employee. Mr Mrdak also explained that the rate of unscheduled absences is not uniform throughout the department, as 'there are certain areas of the department, which have higher rates of unscheduled absences than others'.⁵

3.7 The committee asked for an update on the appointments that have been made to the Moorebank Intermodal Board. Mr Wood, General Manager Rail and Roads, explained that the appointments have been made in two tranches. Firstly, five appointments were made in December 2012 and included Dr Kerry Schott, Chair; Ms Claire Filson, Director; Mr Ray Wilson, Director; Mr Stephen Williams, Director; and the Hon Andrew Fraser, Director. The committee were told the remaining four appointments will be announced in due course by the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport and the Minister for Finance and Deregulation.⁶

Nation Building—Infrastructure Investment and Infrastructure Australia

3.8 The committee sought an update on the Northern Territory Regional Roads Productivity Package, which was announced on 3 August 2012. Officers explained that they are awaiting detailed project proposals reports and cost estimates from the Northern Territory Government. Mr Jaggers, Executive Director, explained that the Northern Territory government will need to undertake significant planning 'between now and when those projects can start construction... [The] planning process we would expect for all projects would take at least a year or two'.⁷

3 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, p. 4

4 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, p. 5.

5 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, p. 5.

6 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, pp 9–11.

7 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, pp 12–13.

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

- Bruce Highway;
- Roper Highway;
- Pacific Highway;
- upgrade of the Yeppen South floodplain;
- Mackay ring road;
- Haughton River Bridge upgrade;
- Hume Highway pricing trial;
- Bolivia Hill, New England Highway;
- Cross River Rail Project;
- Northbridge project;
- Swan Valley bypass;
- East-West road project;
- Townsville Port;
- West Connex project;
- Parramatta Epping rail link;
- Huon Highway;
- Summerleas Road;
- South Road upgrade;
- Midlands Highway;
- Brooker Highway;
- Brisbane Cross River Rail; and
- the Warrigal Road to Clyde upgrade.⁸

3.10 The committee asked Infrastructure Australia to explain its budgetary allocation and staffing arrangements arising from the infrastructure finance reform measure contained in the Tax Laws Amendment (2013 Measures No.2) Bill 2013. Mr Deegan, Infrastructure Coordinator, told the committee that a resourcing plan is being developed to identify what staffing arrangements will be required once the legislation has been passed by Parliament.⁹

3.11 Officers told the committee that the Australian Government has contributed \$4 million to the Western Australian government's light rail planning study which is

8 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, pp 12–30, 54–64.

9 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, pp 19–20.

currently underway. Ms O'Connell, Deputy Secretary, advised the committee that there is a provision for the Federal government to allocate further funding for public transport projects in Perth.¹⁰

3.12 The committee discussed the National Urban Policy Conference held in Sydney on 16 and 17 May 2013, which was convened by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute in partnership with the Australian Government. Of particular interest was a presentation by Mr Lewis Atter, Global Head, Transport Economics and Policy, KPMG, who argued that individual infrastructure projects should be considered and evaluated within a broader context rather than as a single project.¹¹ In response, Mr Deegan stated:

...without necessarily blowing the trumpet of my council, what we have sought to do is to take a broad approach to where we are going, so a national port strategy has been endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments, a national land freight strategy, which is working its way through, and a public transport or city transit national strategy that we are well advanced in... we think these individual projects should be considered as part of a broader network, and so these broader issues are considered at the same time rather than just project by project. Indeed, we think it is one of the flaws of the system to date.¹²

3.13 The committee discussed the funding commitments contained in the Nation Building 1 and 2 programs for 2012-13 and 2013-14, which included the following projects:

- Program Investment;
- Black Spot;
- Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity;
- Roads to Recovery;
- Improving Local Roads; and
- Improving the National Network.¹³

3.14 The committee sought an overview of the feasibility planning for the PortLink project in Kalgoorlie, Western Australia. Mr Wood explained that the funding of the project is split between the Australian Government, which has provided of \$2 million, and the Western Australian government, which has provided \$5 million. The expected aims of the project are to:

10 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, pp 21–22.

11 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, p. 24.

12 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, p. 24.

13 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, pp 30–31.

- investigate the feasibility and viability of an intermodal terminal at Kalgoorlie;
- develop a plan to realign the freight rail system from the centre of Kalgoorlie to the outskirts;
- plan to upgrade the Goldfields Highway between Wiluna and Meekatharra;
- develop a cost-benefit analysis regarding a bypass of Kalgoorlie; and
- develop long-term plans for the road and rail corridors linking Kalgoorlie and the goldfields to the Mid-West and to the Pilbara region.¹⁴

3.15 The committee also discussed the following topics:

- the Western Australian Government freight strategy;
- the national port strategy;
- tolls on motorways;
- the Regional Infrastructure Fund;
- the funding and viability of the Abt Railway in Tasmania; and
- the electrification of the Gawler rail line.¹⁵

Australian Rail Track Corporation

3.16 The committee discussed the Yarraman Creek railway crossing. Mr Fullerton, Chief Executive Officer, told the committee that a preliminary review has found that the culvert at Yarraman Creek needs to be replaced. The Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) has a budget of \$1 million in 2013-14 to engage engineers to design and construct a new culvert which addresses the current problem of flooding from debris blocking the culvert during times of heavy rainfall.¹⁶

3.17 The committee asked officers to explain the ARTC's advanced train management system. Mr Fullerton explained that the ARTC has been working in association with Lockheed Martin to develop the technology to be placed on-board trains, which can intervene and force locomotives to reduce its speed or stop completely. The system is being trialled on the South Australian rail network, with the aim to develop the technology's level of reliability before it is rolled out on every rail network in Australia.¹⁷

14 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, p. 46.

15 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, pp 25–26, 28, 40, 47 and 54–55.

16 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, p. 59.

17 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, pp 60–61.

3.18 The committee also discussed the following topics:

- the Southern Sydney freight line;
- the duplication of freight lines; and
- the Hunter Valley Rail Corridor Air Quality Report.¹⁸

Inspector of Transport Security and the Office of Transport Security

3.19 The committee sought an update on whether any assessments of offshore facilities had been conducted. Mr Dreezer, General Manager, told the committee that no assessments of offshore facilities have been made since 2007. Instead the department has been working with the industry to develop alternative audit and inspection regimes, which they envisage being completed by the end of the year. Mr Mrdak added that the challenge the department faces has been 'to find a workable solution that ensures compliance... recognises our limited resources and the difficulty of accessing a number of these facilities'.¹⁹

3.20 Officers told the committee that the department has established a government industry group through the oil and gas security forum to review the following issues:

- the size of offshore zones;
- communication with maritime users;
- the mutually agreed approach to safety and security;
- developing a pathway to prosecute should an incursion of a zone occur; and
- the enforcement and compliance options.²⁰

3.21 Officers went on to explain that an agreement has been made between industry, the Office of Transport Security and relevant government agencies to run a series of exercises to test whether a one-stop shop approach would work in the event of an incident, which includes using the Australian Government Crisis Coordination Centre and an 1800 number. Mr Retter, Executive Director, told the committee that:

...we are confident it [the one-stop shop] will work, but also to give us some efficacy in terms of the numbers and types of incidents that might require the Commonwealth to respond with the appropriate agency.²¹

3.22 The committee asked officers to provide an update on the arrangements being made in relation to the establishment of Australia's first fully private airport near Toowoomba. Mr Wilson, Deputy Secretary, explained that the airport 'will be required

18 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, pp 62–64.

19 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, p. 65.

20 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, p. 67.

21 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, p. 67.

to meet the same level of standards, subject to what aviation services it provides, as any other regulated airport in Australia.²²

Aviation and Airports

3.23 The committee discussed the management of federal airport leases specifically in relation to Brisbane Airport and the perceived lack of action regarding the development of a parallel runway. Mr Mrdak, explained that:

Over the last few years, the major development plan for the project has been lodged and approved, the various environmental assessment processes completed and works are underway on the development.²³

3.24 The committee sought an update on Avalon Airport in relation to the construction of an international terminal. Mr Borthwick, Acting Executive Director, told the committee that the department and the Department of Defence are currently negotiating with Avalon Airport to amend the lease, which governs the airport's site. Once the lease has been amended the development process for the international terminal will commence.²⁴

3.25 Officers also told the committee that Avalon Airport has initiated discussions with the department and Custom, Immigration and Quarantine (CIQ) agencies regarding the possible level of service that will be required. Mr Borthwick, explained that until the airport reaches an agreement with an airline to provide international services, it is difficult to determine what level of CIQ resources are required, as it will depend on the nature and type of services that need to be accommodated.²⁵

3.26 The committee asked officers to explain why under the Adelaide Noise Amelioration Program the Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Adelaide was allocated \$5 million funding in the 2013-14 Budget. Mr Mrdak told the committee that an Australian Noise Exposure Index (ANEI) is produced annually at Adelaide Airport, which models noise exposure over a period of time. He went on to explain that a review of the 2011 ANEI identified the Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church as being eligible for the Adelaide Noise Amelioration Program due to the growth of air traffic and the expansion of the noise contour.²⁶

3.27 Mr Wilson provided the following clarification in relation to the funding allocated under the Adelaide Noise Amelioration Program for the Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church:

22 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, p. 68.

23 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, pp 69–71.

24 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, p. 71.

25 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, p. 72.

26 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, pp 74–75.

...the church will not be receiving the funding. The department is receiving the funding and will contract the work on behalf of the church...it is not the case that we are granting the church \$5 million. The works will be undertaken under contract to the department.²⁷

3.28 In continuing its interest from previous estimates hearings, the National Airports Safeguarding framework was discussed. The committee were interested in the extent of support within the Standing Council on Transport and Infrastructure regarding the National Airport Safeguarding Framework Guideline A proposed alternate noise metrics. Mr Mrdak explained that Western Australia and New South Wales have indicated their opposition for Guideline A to be used for strategic planning purposes.²⁸

Airservices Australia

3.29 The committee heard that Airservices Australia in conjunction with the Department of Defence will procure and implement a new integrated air traffic management platform. Ms Staib, Chief Executive Officer, told the committee that a memorandum of cooperation has been signed with the Department of Defence, as they work together to finalise the request for tender, which will be released to industry by the end of the current financial year.²⁹

3.30 Officers told the committee that Airservices Australia was recently ranked second by the Civil Air Navigation Service Organisation (CANSO), which undertakes an international benchmarking study of air navigation service providers' safety management systems.³⁰ Annually CANSO compares 28 countries against the following metrics:

- loss of separation rates;
- runway incursion statistics; and
- the maturity of the Safety Management System.³¹

3.31 The committee asked officers to outline the findings of the independent review of air traffic controller numbers carried out by Nav Canada.³² Ms Staib told the committee the report found that Airservices Australia had the appropriate number of

27 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, p. 76.

28 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, pp 78–80.

29 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, p. 83.

30 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, pp 83–84.

31 Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation, 'Airservices among world's best – CANSO Benchmarking Study', media release 8 May 2013, <http://www.canso.org/cms/showpage.aspx?id=4955> (accessed 10 June 2013).

32 Nav Canada provides air traffic control, flight information, weather briefings, aeronautical information and electronic aids to navigation for aircraft in Canadian domestic airspace and international airspace assigned to Canada.

air traffic controllers but it could work more flexibly and smarter in its future workforce planning.³³

3.32 In continuing its interest from previous estimates hearings, the committee sought an update on the progress of the Perth Airport strategic plan and roadmap. The standard terminal arrival speeds initiative was implemented in March 2013. Mr Hartfield explained how the standard terminal arrival speeds works:

...all the aircraft flying in are actually flying at standardised speeds if they are the same type of aircraft, which gives a certain level of predictability and consistency for the controllers...aimed at minimising the time aircraft either spend on the runway or closing the gap between aircraft so that we can fit more on.³⁴

3.33 The committee also discussed the following topics:

- opening new services at Broome and Port Headland;
- fatigue management of air traffic controllers;
- reoccurring training requirements;
- information sharing with other air traffic control agencies; and
- the process of handling noise complaints.³⁵

Civil Aviation Safety Authority

3.34 The committee sought an explanation regarding the apparent increase in the number of senior management positions since 2006. Mr McCormick, Director of Aviation Safety, explained 'we are shifting the focus to the front end of the organisation as best we can'.³⁶

3.35 The committee raised the perceived fear within the aviation industry of retribution for speaking out against the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA). Mr McCormick, told the committee that he was:

...at a lost to understand this... no one has brought anything to me or to my industry complaints commissioner to complain about bullying or harassment.³⁷

3.36 He also gave the following guarantee that 'if anybody threatens retribution from within CASA or carries out retribution we will take action'.³⁸

33 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, p. 85.

34 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, p. 91.

35 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, pp 86–91 and 93–94.

36 *Estimate Hansard*, 29 May 2013, p. 95.

37 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, p. 102.

38 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, p. 102.

3.37 The committee also discussed the following topics:

- Robinson 44 helicopters;
- the development of CASA's aviation safety surveillance tool Sky Sentinel;
- incidents of electronic devices being used on aircraft;
- regulation of unmanned aerial vehicles;
- fatigue management regulations; and
- CASA's taxi expenditure.³⁹

Australian Transport Safety Bureau

3.38 The committee sought an explanation from officers in relation to the Australian Transport Safety Bureau's (ATSB) budget position and the reduction in funding for 2013-14 and the forward estimates. Mr Dolan, Chief Commissioner, told the committee that:

...the only response given in the construct of the budget of our organisation to those sorts of financial pressures is to reduce our staffing over time. That means that we have to be very focused on what matters we choose to investigate in the future, conscious of the risk of missing something important to safety, and in some cases we may need to constrain an investigation because of the call on our resources.⁴⁰

3.39 Officers told the committee that due to the recent rail reforms, the ATSB has acquired overall national responsibility for rail investigations. Mr Dolan expects that the increase in responsibility will also increase the ATSB's revenue source for this year, as the costs of investigations will be recovered directly from states.⁴¹

3.40 Officers were asked to comment on the findings from the committee's *Aviation Accident Investigations* report, specifically, if they had decided to reopen the investigation into the ditching of Pel-Air and if they will retrieve the cockpit voice recorder. Mr Dolan told the committee that:

The recommendations that came out of the committee's report as they referred to ATSB as an independent agency will be reviewed by the commission of the ATSB...so it is not just a decision for me but for the three of us acting collectively in accordance with our legal responsibility.⁴²

39 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, pp 96–100 and 103–108.

40 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, p. 110.

41 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, p. 111.

42 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, p.114.

Australian Maritime Safety Authority

3.41 The committee discussed Marine Orders Part 3, which outlines the eligibility requirements for the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) Certificates of Competency. Officers explained that AMSA certificates are internationally recognised under the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) conventions. Certificates that are issued by Australian states are not internationally recognised unless AMSA has provided formal endorsement that it meets the STCW conventions.⁴³

3.42 Mr Kinley, Acting Chief Executive Officer, went on to explain that:

...we have not always issued those endorsements to every state certificate because some of the certificates...issued under previous requirements have not fully complied with STCW requirements. One of the things that we are hoping to see...is the bringing of all of the certificates issued under the new national system to a level where we will be able to give them the equivalent endorsements under the STCW convention.⁴⁴

3.43 The committee sought information from officers regarding AMSA's role in regulating vessels that transport livestock. Officers explained that AMSA must issue, under Marine Order 43, compliance certificates for any ship carrying livestock from Australia which is in addition to a vessel's seaworthiness. AMSA have commenced a review of Marine Order 43 and are currently consulting with the industry regarding any proposed amendments to the order. The review is expected to be completed within six months.⁴⁵

Surface Transport Policy

3.44 The committee sought an update on the new shipping reforms, which came into effect on 1 July 2012. Ms Zielke, Executive Director, advised that:

...the licencing framework...is progressing well at this stage. It is still early days though in relation to the reforms... we have also received inquiries in relation to access to the tax incentives that will come into effect at the end of the financial year... another part of the reforms was the establishment of Maritime Workforce Development Forum. Over the last few months the forum has produced a census in relation to the maritime skills...and an initial workforce development strategy has also been released.⁴⁶

3.45 The committee also discussed the following topics:

- transitional general shipping licences;

43 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, p. 116.

44 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, p. 117.

45 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, pp 118–119.

46 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, p. 121.

- crew manning levels of ships; and
- the Australian Sea Freight 2010-11.⁴⁷

Policy and Research

3.46 The committee discussed the Keys 2 Drive Program in relation to the funding allocated in 2013-14. Ms O'Connell explained that the program, which commenced in 2007-08, will conclude at the end of 2013-14. The committee heard that the program to April 2013, has had nearly 1200 driving instructors accredited to deliver the program with almost 170 000 free lessons provided to learner drivers.⁴⁸

3.47 The committee asked whether the merger of the Major Cities Unit (MCU) into the Policy and Research division would affect their mission, role, functions or performance. Mr Collett, General Manager, explained that in the short-term MCU did not envisage any significant changes to their role. Rather the move provides additional Senior Executive Service officers to support MCU's work.⁴⁹

3.48 The committee discussed in relation to the decision by the Western Australian government to develop a marina at Point Peron, the role of the National Urban Policy to provide a level of protection to local communities. Mr Collett explained that the National Urban Policy considers issues in a citywide context rather than on a project-by-project basis.⁵⁰

3.49 The committee sought an update on the number of urban public transport projects that were announced as a part of the Budget. Mr Mrdak told the committee that the Budget provided funding for two major metropolitan rail projects, which are the Brisbane Cross River Rail project and Perth City Link project.⁵¹

3.50 The committee also discussed the following topics:

- project assessments guidelines;
- the COAG Reform Council *Capital City Strategic Planning Systems Report*;
- the South Australian Government announcement of the structure plan for the Playford Growth Area;
- the Aviation White Paper; and
- the development and implementation of the NASAG reforms.⁵²

47 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, pp 122–126.

48 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, p. 127.

49 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, pp 127–128.

50 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, p. 128.

51 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, p. 129.

52 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2013, pp 130–136.

Chapter 4

Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport portfolio

4.1 This chapter contains the key issues discussed during the 2013-14 Budget 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.

Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport

4.2 The committee heard evidence from the department on Thursday, 30 May 2013. The hearing was conducted in the following order:

- Corporate Services;
- Office for Sport; and Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority;
- Australian Sports Commission;
- Office for the Arts; and Australia Council for the Arts;
- National Film and Sound Archive; National Gallery of Australia; and Screen Australia;
- Regional Development;
- Local Government; and
- Services to Territories.

Corporate Services

4.3 The committee sought an explanation regarding why the department's answers to questions on notice from Additional Estimates of February 2013 were provided as late as 1 pm on 29 May 2013.¹ Ms Glenys Beauchamp, Secretary, apologised to the committee and stated:

...we have had an excellent record of previous questions on notice. We had over 396 questions on notice for the portfolio, and that does not even include all the subparts. So we had quite a large number of questions on notice... There were a number of external factors that impacted on that delivery.²

4.4 The committee discussed the average number of unscheduled absences taken by staff in 2012-13. Mr Jaime Clout, Chief Operating Officer, told the committee that

1 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, pp 4, 13–14, 36–38, 43 and 107.

2 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, p. 13.

the department's current tracking suggests a result between 10.5 and 11 days per full-time equivalent staff member.³

4.5 The committee asked for an update to a range of staffing items including:

- the number of redundancies offered in 2012-13;
- staff survey;
- the average cost of a staff member;
- the average salary cost;
- the breakdown of staff working in the Local Government division;
- the number of staff working on Constitutional Recognition of Local Government Taskforce;
- fraudulent behaviour by current and former staff;
- misuse of departmental credit cards; and
- the number of staff located outside of Canberra.⁴

4.6 In continuing its interest from previous estimates hearings, the committee discussed the department's building lease arrangements. Of particular interest to the committee was the decision to sign a \$70 million 12-year lease. Mr Clout explained that:

...by taking a 12-year lease we secured a rate of \$309 a square metre, which is a significant saving on our previous lease of about 30 per cent...this property was also very attractive to us because it came fully fitted out.⁵

Office for Sport, Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority and Australian Sports Commission

4.7 The committee discussed the Illicit Drugs In Sport Program and the reduction of funding, which was announced in the 2012-13 Mid-Year Economic Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO). Mr Richard Eccles, Deputy Secretary stated that the reduction in funding recognised that each of the major sporting codes has its own illicit drug policies.⁶

4.8 The committee inquired about the level of consultation that was undertaken with the sports before the funding cut for the Illicit Drugs In Sport Program was announced in MYEFO in October 2012. Mr Eccles, explained:

There was general discussion around their entire integrity work programs. There was no specific consultation per se about the specific cuts. There

3 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, p.4.

4 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, pp 4–5 and 9–10.

5 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, p. 10.

6 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, p. 15.

were discussions that took place... But there was no formalised consultation process. I did hold informal discussions with a couple of the codes to understand exactly what the nature of their business is. But there was no formal consultation.⁷

4.9 The committee sought an update on the number of sports currently subject to investigations being conducted by the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority (ASADA) as a result of the Australian Crime Commission (ACC) Report into *Organised Crime and Drugs in Sport* (ACC Report). Ms Aurora Andruska, ASADA's Chief Executive Officer, told the committee that there are two sports subject to investigations, namely the Australian Football League and the National Rugby League.⁸

4.10 Ms Andruska provided the committee with an outline of the size and scope of ASADA's investigation stemming from the ACC Report, stating:

...what we have done to date. What the ACC did was their investigation and we were provided with information. Our task in an investigation is to convert information into evidence. So from ASADA's perspective our investigation started in February [2013] and we are under four months into that investigation. To date we have interviewed 113 individuals. That ranges from third parties and support staff to players. Those interviews have taken between 1½ and 8½ hours in duration each. We have examined over 50,000 documents that we have had access to.⁹

4.11 The committee asked officers to outline the process ASADA undertakes when conducting investigations. Ms Elen Perdikogiannis, General Manager, explained that:

The way that the process works is that ASADA investigators gather their information, conduct their interviews, and examine the documentary evidence. That then is given to our legal area, who prepare what is known as a case pack, for consideration by the Anti-Doping Rule Violation Panel. Its role is to determine whether or not it is possible that the person, the athlete or the athlete's support person concerned, has committed an anti-doping rule violation. Once the panel makes that finding...the ASADA CEO...notify the sport concerned. Then it is the role of the sport to take forward findings from the panel and to enforce those findings, as breaches of its anti-doping policy.¹⁰

4.12 The committee inquired into the funding of the Asian Cup in 2015. Mr Eccles advised that the Australian Government is providing funding in two separate tranches:

- (i) the Australian Government contributed \$31 million to the local organising committee; and

7 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, p. 16.

8 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, p. 18.

9 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, p. 18.

10 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, pp 20–21.

- (ii) providing funding to the Australian Federal Police, the Department of Immigration and Citizenship and IP Australia.¹¹

4.13 The committee also discussed the following topics:

- Smith Review into the sustainability of football in Australia;
- funding and hosting the 2015 Cricket World Cup; and
- the 1988 Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Recreation and Arts inquiry: *Drugs in Sport Inquiry: Report on the Harassment of a Witness*.¹²

Office for the Arts and the Australia Council for the Arts

4.14 The committee discussed the Resale Royalty Scheme, specifically, the scheme's funding and cost recovery design. The Resale Royalty Scheme received funding of \$2.25 million in the 2008-09 Budget, which over time was intended to be recovered by scheme. Officials told the committee that as of April 2013, \$1.45 million in royalties had been paid since the scheme's introduction in June 2010. Ms Beauchamp added that the department is going to conduct a post-implementation review of the scheme.¹³ On 5 June 2013 the Minister for the Arts the Hon Tony Burke MP announced a review of the Resale Royalty Scheme, which 'will evaluate whether the legislation and its associated scheme are meeting the original objectives of providing artists with proper recognition for their art, and an additional source of income'.¹⁴

4.15 The committee discussed the process for implementing the National Cultural Policy. Ms Beauchamp advised that the Office for the Arts is currently developing, in consultation with the other agencies, an implementation plan to monitor progress against budget appropriation measures.¹⁵

4.16 The committee enquired why the word 'digital' appears 91 times in the National Cultural Policy compared to the words: 'ballet' appears five times; 'literature' appears six times; 'symphony orchestra' appears three times; 'opera' appears 10 times; and 'dance' appears 14 times. Senator the Hon Kate Lundy, representing the Minister for the Arts explained that:

11 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, pp 24–25 and 27–28.

12 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, pp 26, 29–30 and 32–33.

13 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, p. 38.

14 The Hon Tony Burke MP, Minister for Arts, 'Review of Resale Royalty Scheme, Media release, 5 June 2013. <http://ministers.regional.gov.au/honourable-tony-burke-mp/media-releases/2013/review-resale-royalty-scheme> (accessed 17 June 2013).

15 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, p. 39.

...in a digital age...each of the art forms and performance arts that you have described, there is a digital dimension to their work in this current day and age, in the 21st century.¹⁶

4.17 Mr Tony Grybowski, Chief Executive Officer added that it's the Australia Council's role to ensure that 'there is a high level of digital literacy in our current artists and arts organisations'.¹⁷

4.18 The committee asked officials to explain how the contemporary arts sector is funded. Mr Grybowski explained that the Arts Organisation Division of the Australia Council funds over 170 arts organisations for operational purposes which enable artistic directors to curate a program.¹⁸

4.19 The committee sought further information into the funding provided by Australia Council to the Australian Centre for Contemporary Arts' controversial production *Goldene Bend'er*. Mr Grybowski advised the committee that the Australian Centre for Contemporary Arts 'is an independent organisation... [W]hat the Australia Council stands for is freedom of expression of artistic practice'.¹⁹

National Film and Sound Archive, National Gallery of Australia and Screen Australia

4.20 The committee asked officials from the National Film and Sound Archive to clarify an answer to question on notice from Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2012 regarding an approximate increase of 15 per cent to their electricity spend. Mr Noel Florian, Chief Financial Officer and Manager of Corporate Operations, advised that the National Film and Sound Archive does not received any additional funding to cover increasing electricity expenses and has rather focused on reducing the following areas of expenditure: consultancies, travel, hospitality and the number of actual and contracting staff.²⁰

4.21 The committee discussed the purchase of the sculpture *Shiva as Lord of the Dance*. Dr Ron Radford, Director, advised that the sculpture was purchased from Mr Subhash Kapoor, a New York art dealer. It is alleged that Mr Kapoor is currently facing charges in India for possessing stolen property.²¹ Dr Radford advised that he is confident that the sculpture was not stolen and the National Gallery of Australia was assisting law enforcement authorities with their investigations.²²

16 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, p. 40.

17 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, p. 40.

18 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, p. 45.

19 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, p. 45.

20 *Estimate Hansard*, 30 May 2013, pp 48–49.

21 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, p. 49

22 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, p. 49.

4.22 The committee asked Screen Australia officials to explain why the Australian Government provide financial support to the Australian Interactive Games Fund. Dr Ruth Hartley, Chief Executive Officer, told the committee that:

It is clear that the private sector will not support it. The games industry in Australia used to be a fee-for-service industry and at that point it was entirely private sector. Largely, as a result of the dollar, there is almost no fee-for-service work left in Australia. It is a matter of going back and becoming an intellectual property based industry.²³

4.23 The committee dismissed the following Arts agencies without questioning due to timing constraints:

- National Museum of Australia;
- Creative Partnerships Australia;
- National Library of Australia; and
- National Portrait Gallery.²⁴

Regional Development

4.24 The committee asked officials to outline the expenditure from the Regional Development Australia Fund for 2012-13. Ms Beauchamp advised that as at the end of April 2013, the department had spent approximately \$62 million.²⁵

4.25 The committee asked officials to explain why the Regional Australia Institute was set up as a separate company. Ms Beauchamp told the committee it was the decision of the previous minister, who was of the view that the Regional Australia Institute would be more successful and sustainable in attracting funding and entering partnerships if it was set up separate to the department.²⁶

4.26 The committee discussed with officials to outline the Northern Australian Sustainable Futures program. Mr Andrew Dickson, Acting Assistant Secretary, explained that the program was established in 2010 in response to the recommendations from the Northern Australia Land and Water Task Force. The committee heard that the program operates in collaboration with the governments of the Northern Territory, Queensland and Western Australia and seeks to address issues that are critically important to the long-term sustainability of the region.²⁷

4.27 The committee sought an update on the North Queensland Irrigated Agriculture Strategy. Mr Dickson told the committee that the department, the

23 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, p. 51.

24 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, p. 51.

25 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, p. 9.

26 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, pp 10–11.

27 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, pp. 52–53.

Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, and the Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry have collaborated on the strategy, which is expected to be completed by December 2013. The strategy focuses specifically on modelling the Gilbert and Flinders rivers to identify how much water can be sustainably extracted from the rivers to support commercial agricultural development.²⁸

4.28 The committee asked officials to advise when the individual funding for each of the Regional Development Australia committees (RDAs) will be announced. Mr Simon Atkinson, First Assistant Secretary advised that the funding agreements were being finalised and it is expected that the payments to RDAs will commence at the start of July 2013.²⁹

4.29 The committee asked officials to provide an update in relation to the Community Infrastructure Grants program. Mr Gordon McCormack, Assistant Secretary, provided an update on the following projects:

- Northern Territory BMX Association;
- Jingili BMX Club upgrade;
- Cairns District Junior Jones Park Rugby League;
- the City of Greater Geelong;
- Belmont Lions Netball Club;
- Colac Otway Shire and Sporting Precinct;
- Kempsey Airport upgrade;
- Ryde Riverwalk;
- Port Stephens Council;
- Birubi Point Surf Lifesaving Club;
- Mackay Regional Council and Junior Soccer Club;
- Monbulk Soccer Club;
- Taree road maintenance;
- Bucketts Way upgrade; and
- Port Macquarie Indoor Sports Complex.³⁰

4.30 The committee enquired into the level of support and assistance that is provided to the RDAs. Ms Foster told the committee that:

28 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, pp 54–55.

29 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, p. 57.

30 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, pp 59–60.

The support ranges from information flows, so ensuring that the RDAs have access to grants programs that are being announced across the government, information on major initiatives to share with their communities that might be of benefit to them to obviously the funding that we provide for their set-up and operation, and from time to time specific funding to carry out particular initiatives. We provide them with regular newsletters and with support on administrative issues, if they are having challenges with their staffing, for example. So, that is a pretty broad range of support.³¹

4.31 In continuing its interest from previous estimates hearings, the committee sought an update in relation to the Unity Housing Affordable Housing Project. Mr McCormack told the committee that the second payment for milestone 2 of \$1 million is due to be paid on 15 September 2013 and is subject to the following conditions being met:

- 25 per cent completion of the project;
- all statutory approvals are obtained; and
- evidence of contributions being secure.³²

4.32 The committee also discussed the following topics:

- funding allocated to round 3 of RDAs;
- the establishment of an RDA committee in western Sydney;
- funding for the Dunalley Community Hall;
- the West Arnhem Land Fire Abatement Scheme;
- progress update on the Wakefield Regional Water Supply project; and
- the Murray-Darling Basin Regional Diversification Program.³³

Local Government

4.33 The committee discussed at length the announcement by the Prime Minister the Hon Julia Gillard MP, the Minister for Regional Development and Local Government the Hon Anthony Albanese MP and the Attorney General the Hon Mark Dreyfus QC MP to hold a referendum to change the Constitution to recognise local government. The referendum will coincide with the Federal election on 14 September 2013.³⁴

31 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, p. 72.

32 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, p. 77.

33 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, pp 61–65, 67–69, 75, and 77–82.

34 The Hon Julia Gillard MP, Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP, Minister for Regional Development and Local Government, and the Hon Mark Dreyfus QC MP, Attorney General, 'Transcript of Joint Press Conference', Media Release, 9 May 2013 www.pm.gov.au/press-office/transcript-joint-press-conference-52 (accessed 17 June 2013).

4.34 The committee heard that currently there is no constitutional provision for the Commonwealth government to provide funding directly to local governments. The proposed amendment to Section 96 of the Constitution would make a specific provision for the Commonwealth government granting financial assistance to local government bodies.³⁵

4.35 The committee discussed the work of the Constitutional Recognition of Local Government Taskforce. Ms Beauchamp explained that the department was allocated \$10 million in the 2013-14 Budget to develop a civics campaign to inform voters of the referendum.³⁶

4.36 The committee also discussed the following topics related to the referendum for constitutional recognition of local governments:

- the proposed wording of the amendment to Section 96 of the Constitution;
- the ongoing negotiations with state governments regarding the wording of the proposed wording of the bill;
- the findings of the Expert Panel on Constitutional Recognition of Local Government;
- the process for forming the 'yes' and 'no' case;
- funding of the 'yes' and 'no' cases; and
- the department's contact with the Australian Local Government Association.³⁷

Services to Territories

4.37 The committee sought clarification to an answer to a question on notice from Additional Estimates regarding Air New Zealand's contract to provide air services to the Norfolk Island. Ms Fleming, First Assistant Secretary, told the committee that the department will be shortly going out to re-tender air services to Norfolk Island and did not want to signal to the market the level of subsidy on offer from the Australian government.³⁸

4.38 The committee asked officials to explain why the Australian government does not provide funding to Norfolk Island for the purpose of marketing and tourism development. Ms Fleming explained that in relation to tourism development it is considered to be a responsibility of the Norfolk Island government.³⁹

35 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, pp 85–86.

36 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, pp 6–7.

37 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, pp 87–106.

38 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, p. 107.

39 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, p. 107.

4.39 The committee sought an update in relation to the Norfolk Island Reform Package. Ms Fleming explained that:

We will be talking to the Norfolk Island government about the next funding agreement. As part of that funding agreement, we will be negotiating with them some further ongoing reforms and changes to the structure of their economy where we can look at things. We were also provided with a further million dollars in the budget for the 2013-14 year to cover a range of support activities for the government around enhancements in governance. That might include performance audits and financial statement audits, support in family and child services, support for apprenticeship schemes—areas in which we can assist the economy and the productivity of Norfolk Island.⁴⁰

4.40 The committee also discussed the following topics in relation to Norfolk Island:

- extending tax and social security reforms;
- establishing a community food bank;
- ongoing emergency funding;
- the Commonwealth funded review of Norfolk Island's child and family health services; and
- the resealing of Norfolk Island airport runway.⁴¹

Senator Glenn Sterle
Chair

40 *Estimate Hansard*, 30 May 2013, p. 112.

41 *Estimates Hansard*, 30 May 2013, pp 112–115.

Appendix 1

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Documents tabled at hearing on Monday, 27 and Tuesday, 28 May 2013

1. Opening statement, tabled by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry the Hon. Joe Ludwig, 27 May 2013.
2. Opening statement, tabled by Mr Andrew Metcalfe AO, Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, 27 May 2013.
3. 'Fees hike may stop exports', The Advocate, 25 May 2013, tabled by Senator Colbeck, 27 May 2013.
4. 'Cruel truths hit home as cattle export ban, bushfires and drought wreak devastating toll', The Weekend Australian, 25 May 2013, p.1 and 4–5, tabled by Senator Back, 27 May 2013.
5. Industry Equalisation Reserves movement and balances, tabled by Mr Darren Schaffer, Chief Financial Officer, Finance and Business Support, Governance, Information Services and People and Service Delivery, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, 27 May 2013
6. Caring for our Country – regional allocations, tabled by Mr Ian Thompson, First Assistant Secretary, Sustainable Resource Management, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, 28 May 2013.
7. Letter to the Minister for Agriculture and Food Security the Hon Peter Walsh MP regarding the concessional finance available under the Farm Finance Package, tabled by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig, 28 May 2013
8. Summary of the funding of new initiatives in the National Food Plan, tabled by Mr Andrew Metcalfe AO, Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, 28 May 2013
9. Farm Finance departmental costs, tabled by Mr Mark Tucker, Deputy Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, 28 May 2013.

Infrastructure and Transport portfolio

Document tabled at hearing on Wednesday, 29 May 2013

1. Correspondence regarding the National Airports Safeguarding Framework Paper for the 4th SCoTI Meeting, tabled by Senator Humphries, 29 May 2013.
2. Correspondence from Airservices Australia regarding the Australian Transport Safety Bureau Report - Ditching VH-NGA, tabled by Mr Jason Hartfield, Executive General Manager, Air Traffic Control, Airservices Australia, 29 May 2013.

Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport portfolio

Documents tabled at hearing on Thursday, 30 May 2013

1. 'Western Sydney needs its own RDA-WSROC', Media release, Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils, tabled by Ms Glenys Beauchamp, Secretary, Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport, 30 May 2013.
2. 'Facts not fear please in referendum debate', Opinion, The Australian, 17 May 2013, media release, Minister for Regional Development and Local Government the Hon Anthony Albanese MP. 'Let's embrace constitutional change', Opinion, Adelaide Advertiser, 10 May 2013, media release, Minister for Regional Development and Local Government the Hon Anthony Albanese MP, tabled by the Minister for Sport representing the Minister for Regional Development and Local Government, Senator the Hon Kate Lundy, 30 May 2013.

Appendix 3

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