

The Senate

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Education and Employment  
Legislation Committee

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Budget Estimates 2024–25

July 2024

© Commonwealth of Australia 2024

ISBN 978-1-76093-694-5 (Printed version)

ISBN 978-1-76093-694-5 (HTML version)

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Printed by Senate Printing Unit, Parliament House, Canberra.

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# Members

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*(for Senator Brockman, 3 June 2024 to 5 June 2024)*

Senator the Hon Sarah Henderson

LP, VIC

*(for Senator Brockman, 6 June 2024)*

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Gerry McNally, Committee Secretary

Aysha Osborne, Principal Research Officer

Michael Perks, Senior Research Officer

Aisha Bottrill, Research Officer

Jamison Eddington, Administrative Officer



# Chapter 1

## Overview

1.1 On 14 May 2024, the Senate referred the following documents to the Education and Employment Legislation Committee (committee) for examination and report:

- Particulars of proposed expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2025;
- Particulars of certain proposed expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2025; and
- Particulars of proposed expenditure in relation to the parliamentary departments in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2025.<sup>1</sup>

### Portfolio coverage

1.2 In accordance with resolutions of the Senate of 27 July 2022, the committee is responsible for the examination of the expenditure and outcomes of the following portfolios:

- Education; and
- Employment and Workplace Relations.<sup>2</sup>

1.3 A full list of agencies is available at Appendix 1.

### Portfolio Budget Statements 2024–25

1.4 The Portfolio Budget Statements for the Education portfolio and Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio were tabled in the Senate on 14 May 2024.<sup>3</sup>

### Hearings

1.5 On 19 October 2023, the Minister for Finance, Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher, moved that Budget Estimates hearings for the committee would occur from Monday 3 June 2024 to Thursday 6 June 2024.<sup>4</sup>

1.6 Accordingly, the committee agreed to consider particulars of proposed expenditure as follows:

- Employment and Workplace Relations matters – 3 June 2024 to 4 June 2024; and
- Education matters – 5 June 2024 to 6 June 2024.

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<sup>1</sup> *Journals of the Senate*, No. 109, 14 May 2024, p. 3325.

<sup>2</sup> *Journals of the Senate*, No. 2, 27 July 2022, p. 73.

<sup>3</sup> *Journals of the Senate*, No. 109, 14 May 2024, p. 3326.

<sup>4</sup> *Journals of the Senate*, No. 76, 19 October 2023, p. 2170.

- 1.7 The first two days of hearings focussed on the Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio, under the responsibility of the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. The final two days of hearings examined the Education portfolio, under the responsibility of the Department of Education.
- 1.8 The committee heard evidence from the following Ministers:
- Senator the Hon Murray Watt, the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the Minister for Emergency Management, representing the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations; and
  - Senator the Hon Anthony Chisholm, Assistant Minister for Education and Assistant Minister for Regional Development representing the Minister for Skills and Training and the Minister for Education.
- 1.9 Evidence was also provided by the following departmental secretaries who were accompanied by officers of their portfolio departments and agencies:
- Ms Natalie James, Secretary, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations; and
  - Mr Tony Cook PSM, Secretary, Department of Education.
- 1.10 The following portfolio agencies from the Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio were not required to appear:
- Coal Mining Industry (Long Service Leave Funding) Corporation; and
  - Seafarers Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Authority.
- 1.11 Asbestos and Silica Safety and Eradication Agency were called to appear, however they were released without questions on 4 June 2024.
- 1.12 All agencies from the Education portfolio were required to appear. While the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Limited was called to appear, they were released without questions on 5 June 2024.
- 1.13 The committee extends its appreciation to the Ministers and officers of the departments and agencies who assisted the committee in conducting its 2024–25 Budget Estimates hearings.

### **Questions on Notice**

- 1.14 In accordance with Standing Order 26(9)(a), the committee set 1 August 2024 as the date for return of answers to questions on notice arising from the 2024–25 Budget Estimates hearings.
- 1.15 Answers to questions on notice are published to the committee's [website](#).

### **Hansard transcripts**

- 1.16 Committee Hansard transcripts are accessible on the committee's website.
- 1.17 In this report, references to the committee Hansard are to the proof transcripts. Page numbers may vary between the transcripts of the proof Hansard and the official Hansard.



### **Additional Estimates 2023–24: Timeliness of answers to questions on notice**

- 1.18 The committee's 2023–24 Additional Estimates hearings examined the Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio on 14 February 2024 and the Education portfolio on 15 February 2024.
- 1.19 Answers to questions on notice were due by 5 April 2024.
- 1.20 For the Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio, the committee received answers to 582 out of 763 questions on notice by the due date of 5 April 2024.<sup>5</sup> The remaining answers to questions on notice were received between 9 April 2024 and 17 May 2024.
- 1.21 For the Education portfolio, the committee received answers to 9 out of 441 questions on notice by the due date of 5 April 2024.<sup>6</sup> All remaining answers were received on 24 May 2024.
- 1.22 The committee encourages portfolio departments and agencies to supply their answers to questions on notice by the due date for future estimates hearings to ensure the committee has sufficient time to review the answers before the next estimates hearings.

### **Record of proceedings**

- 1.23 The report does not attempt to analyse the evidence presented during the hearings. However, it does provide a brief summary of some of the key issues that were examined by the committee for each portfolio.

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<sup>5</sup> Two of these answers were received from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research, who, whilst not Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio entities under the PGPA Act, appeared under the Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio at the committee's hearing and as such are included in this portfolio's questions statistics.

<sup>6</sup> The nine answers that were received by the due date of 5 April 2024 were from the Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) and Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). AERO and ACECQA are not Education portfolio entities under the PGPA Act, but they appeared under the Education portfolio at the committee's hearing and as such are included in this portfolio's questions statistics.



## Chapter 2

### Hearings

- 2.1 This chapter lists the key topics discussed for each department and agency examined during the committee's hearings for Budget Estimates 2024–25. The discussion follows the outcome and agency structure.

#### **Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio – Monday 3 June 2024**

##### *Department of Employment and Workplace Relations*

- 2.2 Senator the Hon Murray Watt, the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the Minister for Emergency Management, represented the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and was joined by Ms Natalie James, Secretary of the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR).
- 2.3 The committee commenced its examination of DEWR by considering corporate and enabling services, cross-portfolio and general matters.

##### *Corporate and Enabling Services, Cross-portfolio and general matters*

- 2.4 The committee discussed the following matters:
- Update on resolving the underpayment of staff at DEWR:
    - remedial payments to staff;<sup>1</sup>
    - increased number of staff identified as underpaid;<sup>2</sup>
    - internal audit report;<sup>3</sup>
    - total cost relating to the underpayment;<sup>4</sup>
    - use of consultants;<sup>5</sup>
    - engagement with the Fair Work Ombudsman;<sup>6</sup>
    - communications with Minister Tony Burke;<sup>7</sup>
  - Impact of Future Made in Australia policy on the department;<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 5–6.

<sup>2</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 6–7.

<sup>3</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 9–12.

<sup>5</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 12–14.

<sup>6</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 15–17.

<sup>7</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 17–18.

<sup>8</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 19–20.

- Use of labour hire in the department;<sup>9</sup>
- Impact of the Right to Disconnect on the department;<sup>10</sup>
- Estimates Manual for answering Senate Estimates questions;<sup>11</sup> and
- Implementing the workplace delegates rights changes since the passing of the Closing Loopholes Bill 2024.<sup>12</sup>

### *Outcome 3: Workplace Relations*

#### 2.5 The committee discussed the following topics under Outcome 3: Workplace Relations:

- Fair Work Commission annual wage review;<sup>13</sup>
- The Coalition's proposed industrial relations policy framework;<sup>14</sup>
- Allocation of funding for the Productivity Education and Training fund;<sup>15</sup>
- Working Women's Centres:
  - update on funding agreements;<sup>16</sup>
- Changes to the union demerger provisions introduced from the passing of the Closing Loopholes Bill 2024;<sup>17</sup>
- Casual workers:<sup>18</sup>
  - changes to the definition under the *Fair Work Act*;<sup>19</sup>
  - casual conversion;<sup>20</sup>
  - handling of disputes;<sup>21</sup>
- Right to Disconnect:
  - impact analysis on small businesses;<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 20–24.

<sup>10</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 24–26.

<sup>11</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 26–31.

<sup>12</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 33–38.

<sup>13</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 31–33.

<sup>14</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 38–43.

<sup>15</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 43–46, 48–51.

<sup>16</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 46–48.

<sup>17</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 51–54, 57–58.

<sup>18</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 54–56.

<sup>19</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 66, 70–71.

<sup>20</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 66–73, 75–76.

<sup>21</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 73–76.

<sup>22</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 58–59.

- drafting of the amendment;<sup>23</sup>
- guidance for employers;<sup>24</sup>
- clauses in enterprise agreements;<sup>25</sup>
- Review into the *Paid Family and Domestic Violence Leave Act 2022*;<sup>26</sup>
- Investigation into wage theft in the coal mining industry;<sup>27</sup> and
- Right of entry permits:
  - criteria for revoking a permit.<sup>28</sup>

### *Outcome 1: Employment*

2.6 The Secretary of DEWR, Ms Natalie James, made a statement regarding the Pacific Australian Labour Mobility scheme (PALM scheme) before the committee moved to questions:

You might recall from previous discussions about the PALM scheme, as we refer to it, that its domestic operations were insourced from a private provider at the end of 2023. This enabled us to strengthen oversight of the domestic operations and implement a new delivery model. Shortly after the insourcing process was finalised—it was a complex process—we became concerned about the PALM worker numbers and how they were being calculated. In response to this, we commenced a data-quality review of the PALM scheme worker data. We carried this out with the assistance of the department's chief data officer. This review identified a number of factors that were contributing to incorrect calculation of worker data.

...

We know how important PALM is to our stakeholders and how important it is to be transparent and have reliable data. We have established a new methodology to calculate worker numbers. We've commenced a process of recalculation. This is specialised work. We want to make sure that we have confidence in data going forward.<sup>29</sup>

2.7 The committee also discussed the following matters:

- Closing the Gap targets 7 and 8:
  - update on progress in meeting the targets;<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 59–62.

<sup>24</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 62–65.

<sup>25</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 65–66.

<sup>26</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 76–78.

<sup>27</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 78–79, 84.

<sup>28</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 79–84.

<sup>29</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 85–86.

<sup>30</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 86–88.

- PALM scheme:
  - changes to minimum hours worked in a week;<sup>31</sup>
  - breaches of the new deed;<sup>32</sup>
  - historical data discrepancy;<sup>33</sup>
  - accommodation for workers;<sup>34</sup>
- Workforce Australia:
  - performance ratings of service providers;<sup>35</sup>
- Number of people impacted from changes to mutual obligations delivered in the 2024–25 Budget;<sup>36</sup>
- Recommendations from Select Committee on Workforce Australia Employment Services report: Rebuilding Employment Services:<sup>37</sup>
  - timeline for government response;<sup>38</sup>
- ParentsNext program:
  - contract extensions offered to providers;<sup>39</sup>
  - tender process for the new program;<sup>40</sup>
  - new qualifications for staff from providers;<sup>41</sup>
  - changes in the new program;<sup>42</sup>
  - engagement support vouchers;<sup>43</sup>
- Job service providers requesting payslips from Jobseeker participants;<sup>44</sup> and
- Workforce Australia Online.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 88–91.

<sup>32</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, p. 91.

<sup>33</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 94–95.

<sup>34</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 95–98.

<sup>35</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 92–94.

<sup>36</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 98–101.

<sup>37</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 101–103.

<sup>38</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 120–121.

<sup>39</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 103–104.

<sup>40</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 104–105.

<sup>41</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 105–106.

<sup>42</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 106–107, 109–111.

<sup>43</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 112–114.

<sup>44</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 107–109.

<sup>45</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 June 2024, pp. 114–120.

## Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio – Tuesday 4 June 2024

### *Fair Work Commission*

2.8 The committee called officers from the Fair Work Commission and examined the following topics:

- The issuing of right of entry permits;<sup>46</sup>
- Annual wage review;<sup>47</sup>
- Right to Disconnect:<sup>48</sup>
  - guidance to employers;<sup>49</sup>
- *Secure Jobs, Better Pay Act* changes to the bargaining system;<sup>50</sup>
- Wage rises for workers in feminised industries;<sup>51</sup>
- Investigation into claims of wage theft in the coal mining industry;<sup>52</sup>
- Avenues for workplace support for employees;<sup>53</sup>
- Complaints made about Members of the Commission;<sup>54</sup>
- Estimates Manual for answering Senate Estimates Questions;<sup>55</sup> and
- Staffing in the Fair Work Commission:<sup>56</sup>
  - use of labour hire.<sup>57</sup>

### *Office of the Fair Work Ombudsman*

2.9 The committee called officers from the Office of the Fair Work Ombudsman and examined the following matters:

- Right of Entry Permits<sup>58</sup>
- Right to Disconnect:

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<sup>46</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 5–10, 13–15, 21–25.

<sup>47</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 10–12.

<sup>48</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 12–13.

<sup>49</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 38–40.

<sup>50</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 15–16.

<sup>51</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 16–18.

<sup>52</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 18–21.

<sup>53</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 25–27.

<sup>54</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 27–31.

<sup>55</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 32–34.

<sup>56</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 33–34.

<sup>57</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 34–37.

<sup>58</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 40–44.

- use of the \$500 000 provided to the Ombudsman to support the implementation;<sup>59</sup>
- Obligations under the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act*;<sup>60</sup>
- Self-reporting and investigation of the underpayment of staff at the DEWR;<sup>61</sup>
- Answers to Questions on Notice;<sup>62</sup>
- Complaints received relating to underpayments of coal miners;<sup>63</sup>
- Site inspections;<sup>64</sup>
- Number of litigation cases;<sup>65</sup>
- KPMG Review of the Fair Work Ombudsman;<sup>66</sup> and
- Current average staffing level in the Industrial Compliance Branch.<sup>67</sup>

### ***Safe Work Australia***

2.10 The committee called officers from Safe Work Australia and discussed the following topics:

- Ban on engineered stone;<sup>68</sup>
  - compensation payments;<sup>69</sup> and
  - transition periods.<sup>70</sup>

### ***Comcare***

2.11 The committee called officers from Comcare and discussed the use of Independent Medical Examinations.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 44–45.

<sup>60</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, p. 45.

<sup>61</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 46–52.

<sup>62</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 52–53.

<sup>63</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 53–58.

<sup>64</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, p. 58.

<sup>65</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 58–60.

<sup>66</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 60–61.

<sup>67</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 62–65.

<sup>68</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 65–67.

<sup>69</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 65–66.

<sup>70</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 66–67.

<sup>71</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 67–69.



## *Department of Employment and Workplace Relations*

### *Outcome 2: Skills and Training (Including Jobs and Skills Australia)*

2.12 The committee called officers from DEWR in relation to Outcome 2: Skills and Training (Including Jobs and Skills Australia) and the Chair welcomed Senator the Hon Anthony Chisholm, Assistant Minister for Education and Assistant Minister for Regional Development, representing the Minister for Skills and Training.

2.13 The committee examined the following topics:

- Advice provided by Jobs and Skills Australia to the government;<sup>72</sup>
- Migration Strategy;<sup>73</sup>
- Specialist Skills Pathway;<sup>74</sup>
- Draft Core Skills Occupation List;<sup>75</sup>
- New Energy Apprenticeship program;
  - interest in the program;<sup>76</sup>
- Apprenticeship incentives;<sup>77</sup>
- Boosting Apprenticeships Commencements program;<sup>78</sup>
- Strategic Review of the Australian Apprenticeship Incentive System;<sup>79</sup>
- Fee-free TAFE enrolments;<sup>80</sup>
- Jobs and Skills Councils;<sup>81</sup>
- Australian Skills Guarantee Procurement Connected Policy;<sup>82</sup>
- Future Made in Australia policy;<sup>83</sup>
- AUKUS:
  - establishment of skills taskforce;<sup>84</sup> and

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<sup>72</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 71–72.

<sup>73</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 72–73.

<sup>74</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 73–74.

<sup>75</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 74–83, 89, 105–106.

<sup>76</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 83–86.

<sup>77</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 86–89.

<sup>78</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 89–91.

<sup>79</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 91–93.

<sup>80</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 93–96.

<sup>81</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 97–98.

<sup>82</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 98–104.

<sup>83</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, p. 104.

<sup>84</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, p. 106.

- Skills and Training Academy.<sup>85</sup>

### ***Australian Skills Quality Authority***

2.14 The committee called officers from the Australian Skills Quality Authority and examined the following matters:

- Annual registration for training providers;<sup>86</sup> and
- Meeting of performance targets.<sup>87</sup>

### ***National Centre for Vocational Education Research***

2.15 The committee called officers from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research and discussed the following topics:

- Engagement with the Minister for Skills and Training;<sup>88</sup>
- Engagement with unions;<sup>89</sup> and
- Changes in the number of women up taking traineeships.<sup>90</sup>

## **Education portfolio – Wednesday 5 June 2024**

### ***Department of Education***

2.16 Senator the Hon Anthony Chisholm, Assistant Minister for Education and Assistant Minister for Regional Development, represented the Minister for Education and was joined by Mr Tony Cook PSM, Secretary of the Department of Education.

2.17 The committee commenced its examination of the Department of Education by considering topics under corporate and enabling services, cross-portfolio and general matters.

### ***Corporate and Enabling Services, Cross-portfolio, and general matters***

2.18 The committee discussed the following matters:

- Answers to Questions on Notice:
  - timeliness of answers;<sup>91</sup>
  - advice provided to agencies on answering questions on notice;<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, p. 107–108.

<sup>86</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, p. 109.

<sup>87</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, pp. 110–111.

<sup>88</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, p. 112.

<sup>89</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, p. 112.

<sup>90</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 June 2024, p. 113.

<sup>91</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 4–5.

<sup>92</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 6–7.

- Estimates Manual for answering Senate Estimates Questions on Notice;<sup>93</sup>
- Be That Teacher campaign;<sup>94</sup>
- Increased staffing profile;<sup>95</sup>
- Changes in funding of programs within the Department;<sup>96</sup>
- Breaches of the PGPA Act;<sup>97</sup>
- Closing the Gap;<sup>98</sup>
- Publishing of grant outcomes;<sup>99</sup>
- Media/communication campaigns:<sup>100</sup>
  - total staff in communications team;<sup>101</sup>
  - boosting of social media posts;<sup>102</sup>
- Notifiable data breaches;<sup>103</sup> and
- Strengthening the Capability of the Education Portfolio to Deliver Critical Functions budget measure.<sup>104</sup>

### *Outcome 1: Schools*

2.19 The committee called officers from the department in relation to Outcome 1: Schools and examined the following topics:

- Antisemitism in schools;<sup>105</sup>
- Student Wellbeing Boost:<sup>106</sup>
  - funding delivered to schools with high numbers of Jewish students;<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 7–10, 12–13, 16–18.

<sup>94</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 10–11.

<sup>95</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, p. 13.

<sup>96</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 13–15.

<sup>97</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, p. 15.

<sup>98</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, p. 16.

<sup>99</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 18–20.

<sup>100</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 20–21.

<sup>101</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, p. 20.

<sup>102</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, p. 20.

<sup>103</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 21–22.

<sup>104</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 22–23.

<sup>105</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 23–25.

<sup>106</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 23–26, 55–57.

<sup>107</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 23–26.

- Securing Faith Based Places grants;<sup>108</sup>
- Conduct of teachers in schools;<sup>109</sup>
  - activism in schools;<sup>110</sup>
- National School Reform Agreement;<sup>111</sup>
- Social cohesion in schools:
  - Together for Humanity program;<sup>112</sup>
- Investigation into Cranbrook School;<sup>113</sup>
- Schooling Resource Standard;<sup>114</sup>
- Students with a disability:
  - disability loading settings in schools;<sup>115</sup>
  - Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability;<sup>116</sup>
  - estimated increase in the number of students with a disability;<sup>117</sup>
- Utilisation of funds from the Schools Upgrade Fund;<sup>118</sup>
- Addressing school refusal;<sup>119</sup>
- Better, Safer Future for Central Australia plan;<sup>120</sup>
- Teach for Australia;<sup>121</sup>
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Educational Corporation (NATSIEC);<sup>122</sup>
- Consent and Respectful Relationships Education;<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 24–25.

<sup>109</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 26–27.

<sup>110</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 32–34.

<sup>111</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 27–31, 85–87.

<sup>112</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 31–32, 34–35.

<sup>113</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 35–36.

<sup>114</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 36–39.

<sup>115</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 39, 41–43.

<sup>116</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 40–41, 43.

<sup>117</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 41–42.

<sup>118</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 43–47, 63–68.

<sup>119</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 47–50.

<sup>120</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 50–53, 57–60.

<sup>121</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 54–55.

<sup>122</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 60–61.

<sup>123</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 61–63, 68–69, 73.

- Brindabella Christian College:
  - underpayment of superannuation to teachers;<sup>124</sup>
- Australian Schools Anti-bullying Collective funding allocation;<sup>125</sup>
- First Nations Teacher Strategy;<sup>126</sup>
- \$5.3 million to extend the Good to Great Australia pilot program;<sup>127</sup>
- Studio Schools funding;<sup>128</sup>
- Impact of vaping on student learning;<sup>129</sup>
- Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships;<sup>130</sup>
- City to Country Partnerships;<sup>131</sup>
- Regional Education Commissioner;<sup>132</sup>
- Consideration given to incorporating behaviour teaching in the curriculum;<sup>133</sup>
- Enrolment projections for Government and non-Government schools;<sup>134</sup> and
- Mobile phones in schools.<sup>135</sup>

### ***Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority***

2.20 The committee called officers from the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority and discussed the following matters:

- Staff travel expenditure;<sup>136</sup> and
- NAPLAN:
  - questions included in the tests;<sup>137</sup>
  - results release date;<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 69–70.

<sup>125</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 70–71.

<sup>126</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, p. 71.

<sup>127</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 71–73.

<sup>128</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 73–78.

<sup>129</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 78–79.

<sup>130</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 79–80.

<sup>131</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 80–82.

<sup>132</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 82–83.

<sup>133</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 83–85.

<sup>134</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, p. 85.

<sup>135</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, p. 87.

<sup>136</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 88–90.

<sup>137</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 90–91.

<sup>138</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 91–92.

- changes to standards.<sup>139</sup>

### ***Australian Education Research Organisation***

2.21 The committee called officers from the Australian Education Research Organisation and examined the following topics:

- Evidenced-based teaching in schools;<sup>140</sup>
- Role of Head of Philanthropy;<sup>141</sup>
- Engagement with the established education research community;<sup>142</sup> and
- Explicit instruction.<sup>143</sup>

### ***Department of Education***

#### *Outcome 1: Early Childhood and Youth*

2.22 The committee called officers from the Department of Education in relation to Outcome 1: Early Childhood and Youth and considered the following matters:

- Wages for early childhood educators;<sup>144</sup>
- Independent review into the *Family Legislation Amendment (Cheaper Childcare) Act 2022*;<sup>145</sup>
- Professional Development Grants;<sup>146</sup>
- Child Care Subsidy (CCS) activity test;<sup>147</sup>
- Workforce shortages;<sup>148</sup>
- Fee increases in childcare;<sup>149</sup>
- Enrolments into early childhood education fee free TAFE;<sup>150</sup>
- Reliance on migrants in the sector;<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 93–94.

<sup>140</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 95–96.

<sup>141</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 96–97.

<sup>142</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 97–98.

<sup>143</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 98–99.

<sup>144</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 99, 103–104.

<sup>145</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 100–101.

<sup>146</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 101–102, 105.

<sup>147</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 102–103.

<sup>148</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 104–105.

<sup>149</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 105–106.

<sup>150</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 106–107.

<sup>151</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 107–110.

- Integrity measures announced in the budget;<sup>152</sup>
- In Home Care program:
  - amount of the CCS used;<sup>153</sup>
  - number of educators;<sup>154</sup>
  - reviews of the program;<sup>155</sup>
- Community Childcare Fund:
  - Kingston Southeast Early Learning and Childcare services;<sup>156</sup>
- Inclusion Support Program;<sup>157</sup>
- Large providers reporting their financial information;<sup>158</sup>
- Starting Blocks website upgrade;<sup>159</sup>
- Wait times to access child care;<sup>160</sup>
- Approvals for CCS;<sup>161</sup>
- Communication campaign for the CCS changes;<sup>162</sup> and
- 2022–23 Budget funding for the Office for Youth.<sup>163</sup>

## Education portfolio – Thursday 6 June 2024

### *Department of Education*

#### *Outcome 2: Higher Education, Research and International*

2.23 The committee called officers from the Department of Education in relation to Outcome 2: Higher Education, Research and International and examined the following topics:

- Antisemitism on university campuses;<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 110–111.

<sup>153</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 111–112.

<sup>154</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, p. 112.

<sup>155</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 112–113.

<sup>156</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 113–114.

<sup>157</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, p. 115.

<sup>158</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 115–116, 118.

<sup>159</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 116–118.

<sup>160</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, p. 119.

<sup>161</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, PP. 119–120.

<sup>162</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 120–121.

<sup>163</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 5 June 2024, pp. 122–123.

<sup>164</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 3–7.

- University encampments;<sup>165</sup>
- Australian Universities Accord:
  - racism at universities;<sup>166</sup>
  - budget support;<sup>167</sup>
  - progress on implementing recommendations;<sup>168</sup>
  - changes to the Student Services Amenities Fee;<sup>169</sup>
  - update on progress on five priority actions from the interim report;<sup>170</sup>
  - support for students policy;<sup>171</sup>
- Freedom of speech on university campuses;<sup>172</sup>
- Job-ready Graduates Package:
  - course fee increases;<sup>173</sup>
  - status of universities removing the 50 per cent pass rule;<sup>174</sup>
- HECS-HELP loans:
  - changes to indexation;<sup>175</sup>
- Commonwealth Prac Payment:
  - commencement date;<sup>176</sup>
  - process for deciding on professions to receive the payment;<sup>177</sup>
  - budget costs;<sup>178</sup>
  - eligibility;<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 4–7.

<sup>166</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 8–9.

<sup>167</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 18–19.

<sup>168</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, p. 19.

<sup>169</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, p. 20.

<sup>170</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 52–53.

<sup>171</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 53–54.

<sup>172</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 9–10, 14.

<sup>173</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 10–11, 31–32.

<sup>174</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, p. 53.

<sup>175</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 11–13, 20–21, 26–30, 35–36.

<sup>176</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 13–14, 36–40.

<sup>177</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 30–31, 33–34, 40.

<sup>178</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 36–37.

<sup>179</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 37–38.



- consultation with the sector;<sup>180</sup>
- Upholding of the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 at universities;<sup>181</sup>
- Australian Human Rights Commission anti-racism study into universities;<sup>182</sup>
- National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender Based Violence;<sup>183</sup>
- Letter sent to all higher education providers by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency;<sup>184</sup>
- Investment in research and development;<sup>185</sup>
- Education Services for Overseas Students Amendment (Quality and Integrity) Bill 2024 [Provisions];<sup>186</sup>
- impact on jobs in the sector;<sup>187</sup>
- Fee-free Uni Ready Courses:
  - number of enrolments;<sup>188</sup>
  - budget allocation;<sup>189</sup>
- Regional Study Hubs;<sup>190</sup>
- National Student Ombudsman:
  - responsibilities and powers;<sup>191</sup>
  - cost recovery arrangements;<sup>192</sup>
- International Student Visa age limit;<sup>193</sup>
- Additional 20,000 Commonwealth supported university places;<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 39–40.

<sup>181</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 14–16.

<sup>182</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 16–18.

<sup>183</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 21–24, 50–51.

<sup>184</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 24–26.

<sup>185</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 32–33.

<sup>186</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 41–44.

<sup>187</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 50–51.

<sup>188</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, p. 44.

<sup>189</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 44–46.

<sup>190</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 46–48.

<sup>191</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 48–49.

<sup>192</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 49–50.

<sup>193</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 51–52.

<sup>194</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 54–56.

- Establishment of the Australian Tertiary Education Commission;<sup>195</sup>
- Student Services Amenities Fee:
  - utilisation of the revenue;<sup>196</sup>
- Action Plan Addressing Gender-based Violence in Higher Education;<sup>197</sup>
- Connections between VET and higher education;<sup>198</sup>
- 4000 places allocated to the nuclear powered submarine student pathways program;<sup>199</sup>
- Micro-credentials;<sup>200</sup>
- Higher Education Disability Support Program;<sup>201</sup>
- Nixon Review;<sup>202</sup>
- Letter from Department of Home Affairs to a number of higher education providers for alleged non-genuine or exploitative recruitment practices;<sup>203</sup> and
- Start-up Year program:
  - up-take of places.<sup>204</sup>

### ***Australian Research Council***

2.24 The committee called officers from the Australian Research Council and discussed the following matters:

- Changes to the dates for grant schemes;<sup>205</sup>
- Two-stage process for discovery grants:
  - differences in scores from college of experts;<sup>206</sup>
- Centres of Excellence;<sup>207</sup> and

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<sup>195</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 56–57.

<sup>196</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 57–58.

<sup>197</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 58–59.

<sup>198</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 59–60.

<sup>199</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 61–63, 69–71.

<sup>200</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 63–64.

<sup>201</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 64–66.

<sup>202</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, p. 66.

<sup>203</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 67–69.

<sup>204</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 71–75.

<sup>205</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 75–76.

<sup>206</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 76–78.

<sup>207</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 78–79.

- Research project involving Dr. Randa Abdel-Fattah.<sup>208</sup>

### ***Australian National University***

2.25 Professor Genevieve Bell, appeared before the committee for the first time in her role as the President and Vice-Chancellor of the Australian National University (ANU). This was also just the second time that the ANU had appeared at an estimates hearing, with its first appearance being in 2014. Professor Bell made a short opening statement reflecting on some of the challenges the university sector is currently facing:

Students of all ages come from all over Australia and from more than a hundred countries around the world to study with us. Our student population is small by Australian university standards, and that allows us to offer a unique learning experience, featuring a low ratio of students to academic staff and the highest proportion of students living on campus accommodation in the sector. Currently, the higher education sector is facing some challenges that I am sure we will discuss today, including a rapidly evolving policy landscape, the impact of slowing migration numbers on universities as well as the encampment protests that have sparked much public debate. Our commitment to the classic ideal of the university—academic rigour, free inquiry, and free expression and the right to protest—is not without its challenges. Our campus is one of several in Australia and many more across the world that have seen protest activity in recent times, reflecting on the conflict in the Middle East. Throughout this period, the ANU has acknowledged the rights enshrined in the university's policies on academic freedom and freedom of speech.<sup>209</sup>

2.26 The committee then discussed the following matters:

- Management of pro-Palestine encampments on campus:
  - disciplinary action;<sup>210</sup>
  - moving of the encampment;<sup>211</sup>
  - communications to students;<sup>212</sup>
  - concerns from Jewish students;<sup>213</sup>
  - increased security;<sup>214</sup>
- Investment holdings in weapons manufacturing companies;<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 79–81.

<sup>209</sup> Professor Genevieve Bell, *Opening Statement*, 6 June 2024, [p. 3] (tabled 6 June 2024).

<sup>210</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 82–84, 86, 92.

<sup>211</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 84, 92–95.

<sup>212</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, p. 89.

<sup>213</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 90–91, 97–99.

<sup>214</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 86–87, 89.

<sup>215</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 85–88.

- Support provided to Palestinian and Jewish students;<sup>216</sup>
- Courses and training relating to social cohesion;<sup>217</sup> and
- Reporting of islamophobia on campus.<sup>218</sup>

### *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency*

2.27 The committee called officers from the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) and examined the following matters:

- Responses to TEQSA's letter sent to all universities in relation to protecting student and staff safety on campus;<sup>219</sup> and
- Regulatory role and powers in terms of student safety on campus.<sup>220</sup>

**Senator Tony Sheldon**  
**Chair**

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<sup>216</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 94, 96.

<sup>217</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 94–95.

<sup>218</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 99–100.

<sup>219</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 100–102.

<sup>220</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 6 June 2024, pp. 100–105.

# Appendix 1

## Portfolio departments and agencies

### Employment and Workplace Relations Portfolio

#### *Departments*

- Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

#### *Agencies*

- Asbestos and Silica Safety and Eradication Agency
- Australian Skills Quality Authority
- Fair Work Commission
- Office of the Fair Work Ombudsman
- Safe Work Australia
- Seafarers, Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Authority
- Coal Mining Industry (Long Service Leave Funding) Corporation
- Comcare

1.1 The below agency is not a portfolio agency as specified under the PGPA Act, however, it was requested to appear at the Budget Estimates 2024–25 hearing by the committee and appeared under the Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio:

- National Centre for Vocational Education Research

### Education Portfolio

#### *Departments*

- Department of Education

#### *Agencies*

- Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
- Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
- Australian Research Council
- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency
- Australian National University

1.2 The below two agencies are not portfolio agencies as specified under the PGPA Act, however, were requested to appear at the Budget Estimates 2024–25 hearing by the committee and appeared under the Education portfolio:

- Australian Education Research Organisation
- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority.



## Appendix 2

### Tabled documents

#### Monday 3 June 2024

*Ms Natalie James, Secretary, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations*

- Correspondence between Coalition Senators and Ms James

*Senator Tony Sheldon*

- Article from the Australian, 30 May 2024
- Letter from Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash to Mr Richard Shields
- Proposed Framework for Liberal Party Industrial Relations Policy

*Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck*

- Article from the Advocate, 22 February 2023

#### Tuesday 4 June 2024

*Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash*

- Article from Workplace Express, 28 March 2024
- CFMEU WA Facebook Post, 17 April 2024

*Senator Matt O'Sullivan*

- Transcript from a press conference from the Minister for Home Affairs, the Hon Claire O'Neill MP

*Ms Anna Faithfull, Deputy Secretary, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations*

- Australian Apprentices in Training by State and Territory

#### Wednesday 5 June 2024

*Mr Tony Cook PSM, Secretary, Department of Education*

- Response to Senator O'Sullivan's letter
- Response to Senator O'Sullivan's additional letter
- Response to Senator Allman-Payne's letter
- Revised response to Schools question 5 in Senator O'Sullivan's letter of 29 May 2024

*Senator the Hon Sarah Henderson*

- Approaches to Senate estimates questions on notice asked of all (or multiple) agencies
- Newsletter and social media post relating to upgrades to Mount Eliza secondary school facilities
- Article from the Sydney Morning Herald, 13 March 2024

*Senator Kerryanne Liddle*

- Articles tabled by Senator Liddle

*Senator Matt O'Sullivan*

- Articles tabled by Senator O'Sullivan

*Mr Stephen Gniel, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority*

- Opening statement

*Dr Jennfier Donovan, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Education Research Organisation*

- Opening statement

### **Thursday 6 June 2024**

*Mr Tony Cook PSM, Secretary, Department of Education*

- Letter from the Group of Eight to the Attorney General
- Letter from TEQSA to universities
- Letter from TEQSA to non-university higher education institutions

*Senator Matt O'Sullivan*

- Letter from Minister Clare to Professor O'Kane
- 2022 Higher Education Providers Finance Tables
- Article from the West Australian, 8 December 2023
- Map of ANU

*Professor Genevieve Bell AO, Vice-Chancellor & President, Australian National University*

- Opening statement
- Statement from the Chancellor of ANU

*Senator Karen Grogan*

- Article from Sky News, 9 May 2024

*Ms Anna Faithfull, Deputy Secretary, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations*

- 2023 Fee-Free TAFE Enrolments by Field of Education