

Parliamentary Inquiries

February 2014

Committee inquiries provide an opportunity for organisations and individuals to participate in policy making and have their views placed on the public record and considered as part of the decision-making process.

This Occasional Paper provides a brief overview of the new and continuing Senate, House and Joint Committee inquiries in the 44th Parliament. These inquiries are either still accepting submissions or are no longer accepting submissions but are yet to report.

The Hawker Britton Occasional Paper on Parliamentary Committees and inquiries is available [here](#).

The Hawker Britton guide to participating in Parliamentary inquiries is available [here](#).

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Senate Committees

Senate Community Affairs References Committee

[Committee homepage](#) | [Committee membership](#)

Care and management of younger and older Australians living with dementia and behavioural and psychiatric symptoms of dementia (BPSD)

This inquiry will report on the scope and adequacy of the different models of community, residential and acute care for Australians living with dementia and BPSD, with particular reference services provided both by the Commonwealth, State and Territories, and also the non-government sector. It will examine the resourcing of care and report on scope for improving care and management, increasing access to care and reducing physical and chemical restraints.

Submissions closed 03 May 2013. The reporting date was originally 26 June 2013 and was subsequently extended to 12 August 2013.

On 14 November 2013 the matter was re-referred to the Committee by the Senate for inquiry.

The Committee is due to report by 28 February 2014.

The terms of reference are available [here](#).

The Interim Report is available [here](#).

Grandparents who take primary responsibility for raising their grandchildren

The inquiry will examine Grandparents who take on the primary responsibility for raising their grandchildren when parents are unable or unwilling to do so, through a formal or informal care arrangement, including:

- the practical challenges facing grandparents raising grandchildren, and their support needs;
- recognising the role and contribution of grandparents raising their grandchildren;
- other challenges that grandparents raising their grandchildren face in undertaking their role, including in circumstances complicated by family conflict, mental illness, substance abuse, homelessness, child abuse or neglect, or family violence;
- legal barriers, including Legal Aid entitlements for grandparents seeking to formalise their custodial arrangements through the Family Law Courts;
- the practical measures that can be implemented by Federal, State and Territory governments and the community sector, including key priorities for action;
- the specific needs of particular groups within the caring population.

The terms of reference are available [here](#).

The closing date for submissions is 14 March 2014.

The Committee is due to report by 30 September 2014.

Prevalence of different types of speech, language and communication disorders and speech pathology services in Australia

This inquiry will examine the prevalence and instances of different types of speech, language and communication disorders and swallowing difficulties in Australia, the availability and adequacy of speech pathology services provided by the Commonwealth, state and local governments and across Australia, and the social and economic cost of failing to treat communication and swallowing disorders.

The terms of reference are available [here](#).

The closing date for submissions is 21 February 2014.

The Committee is due to report by 27 March 2014.

Senate Economics Affairs Legislation Committee

[Committee homepage](#) | [Committee membership](#)

Reserve Bank Amendment (Australian Reconstruction and Development Board) Bill 2013

The Committee will examine the Private Member's bill of Senator John Madigan (DLP) and Senator Nick Xenophon, [Reserve Bank Amendment \(Australian Reconstruction and Development Board\) Bill 2013](#), which creates a specific entity tasked with examining, reconstructing and improving the financial status of the Australian agricultural sector and its associated industries and infrastructures.

As such, the Bill establishes an 'Australian Reconstruction and Development Board' (ARDB) under the Reserve Bank, with the task of forming and implementing rural reconstruction and development policy.

The closing date for submissions is 10 February 2014.

The Committee is due to report by 26 March 2014.

Tax Laws Amendment (Research and Development) Bill 2013

The Committee will examine the [Tax Laws Amendment \(Research and Development\) Bill 2013](#), which amends the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997* to deny access to the research and development (R&D) tax incentive for companies with aggregated assessable income of \$20 billion or more for an income year.

The closing date for submissions is 22 January 2014.

The Committee is due to report by 17 March 2014.

Senate Economics Affairs References Committee

[Committee homepage](#) | [Committee membership](#)

Affordable housing

This inquiry will examine government policies to encourage home ownership and residential property investment and increase housing supply, including current taxes and levies, and the operation, effect and future of the National Rental Affordability Scheme.

The inquiry will also look at the regulatory structures governing the roles of financial institutions and superannuation funds in the home lending and property sectors, and the operation and effectiveness of rent and housing assistance programs.

The inquiry is broad in scope, and will report on implications for other related changes to Commonwealth government policies and programs, including taxation policy, aged care, disability services, Indigenous affairs and for state and territory governments.

Construction, building materials, sustainability and the availability of an appropriately skilled workforce will also form part of the inquiry.

The Committee will look to other countries, including the United Kingdom, United States of America, France, Canada, Austria and the Netherlands, that provide a stable and cost effective way of funding affordable rental and social housing.

Finally, the Committee will examine the impact of not having a long-term, national affordable housing plan.

The terms of reference are available [here](#).

The closing date for submissions is 25 March 2014.

The Committee is due to report by 26 June 2014.

The performance of the Australian Securities and Investments Commission

This inquiry will examine aspects of the performance of ASIC. In particular, it will look at the effectiveness of ASIC's enabling legislation, the accountability framework to which ASIC is subject, the workings of ASIC's collaboration with other regulators and law enforcement bodies, its complaints management policies and practices and the protections afforded by ASIC to corporate and private whistleblowers.

The terms of reference are available [here](#).

The closing date for submissions is 10 January 2014.

The Committee is due to report by 30 May 2014.

Ticket scalping in Australia

The Committee will examine ticket scalping in Australia, with particular reference to the prevalence of ticket scalping and its impact on ticket prices and sales, the effectiveness of current state-based consumer protection legislation, and issues of illegality, including the prevalence of counterfeit tickets.

The terms of reference are available [here](#).

The closing date for submissions is 10 February 2014.

The Committee is due to report by 26 March 2014.

Senate Education and Employment References Committee

[Committee homepage](#) | [Committee membership](#)

The immediate future of the childcare sector in Australia

This inquiry will examine the cost and availability of childcare for parents over the short term, including the effectiveness of the current government rebates, the administrative burden (including the impact of the introduction of the National Quality Framework) on childcare, the impact of the current regulatory environment, and methods to strengthen the sector in the short term to boost Australia's productivity and workplace participation for parents.

The terms of reference are available [here](#).

Submissions are currently open.

The Committee is due to report by 17 June 2014.

The delivery of quality and affordable early childhood education and care services

This inquiry will look at the outcomes for children in early childhood education and care services, including workforce factors such as stability, qualifications and wage rates, quality regulation (including staff-to-child ratios), participation and access to services, and environments for learning.

The Inquiry will also produce a progress report into the implementation of the National Quality Framework (NQF), including parents' experiences of the outcomes of the NQF, the impacts of the announced government amendments to the NQF, and the outcomes for children and early childhood education and care services.

The terms of reference are available [here](#).

Submissions are currently open.

The Committee is due to report by 17 June 2014.

Technical and further education (TAFE) in Australia

The inquiry will examine the role of TAFEs in linking with secondary and higher education, developing skills in the Australian economy, and enabling Australians to improve themselves and increase their life, education and employment prospects, and the delivery of services and programs to support regions, communities and disadvantaged individuals to access education, training and skills and, through them, a pathway to further education and employment.

More specifically, the inquiry will examine the effect of a competitive training market on TAFE and the level and allocation of public funding for TAFE and its accessibility, including the application and effect of additional charges to TAFE students.

The inquiry is required to consider any public information provided to the 2013 House of Representatives inquiry by the Standing Committee on Education and Employment on the [role of the technical and further education system and its operation](#); and to public hearings in all capital cities, with a minimum of Melbourne, Sydney, Perth and Brisbane, as well as a major regional centre in either New South Wales or Victoria.

The terms of reference are available [here](#).

The Committee is due to report by 13 May 2014.

The Government's approach to re-establishing the Australian Building and Construction Commission

The inquiry will examine the potential impact of the re-establishment of the Australian Building and Construction Commission on the building and construction industry. In particular, it will look at the need or otherwise for a specialist industrial regulator in the industry, the impact of the Bill, whether it is consistent with Australia's obligations under international law;

The inquiry will also examine the potential impact of the bills on employees, employers, employer bodies, trade and labour councils, unions and union members.

The extreme and heavy-handed proposed powers of the Australian Building and Construction Commission will also be reviewed, including coercive powers, conduct of compulsory interviews (including the absence of a guarantee to a right to silence), and imprisonment for those who do not cooperate.

The particular provisions of the bills that introduce the law of conspiracy into the industrial regulation of the building and construction industry will also be a focus for the inquiry.

The terms of reference are available [here](#).

Submissions are open until 17 January 2014.

The Committee is due to report by 27 March 2014.

Provisions of the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Amendment Bill 2013

The Inquiry will examine the potential impact of the amendments to interfere with the ongoing operation of registered organisations in Australia and the potential of the amendments to impede the ability of employees of registered organisations to carry out their duties.

The terms of reference are available [here](#).

Submissions are open until 17 January 2014.

The Committee is due to report by 27 March 2014.

Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee

[Committee homepage](#) | [Committee membership](#)

Australia Post in Australian communities

The inquiry was established on 14 November 2013 and will report on the overall performance, importance and role of Australia Post in Australian communities, and the challenges it faces in the immediate and longer term. It will also examine the operations of Australia Post in relation to Licensed Post Offices (LPOs), with particular reference to regional LPOs, the licensing and trading conditions applicable to LPOs and the marketing, retail and trading arrangements between Australia Post and LPOs and other entities.

The terms of reference are available [here](#).

The closing date for submissions is 25 November 2013.

The Committee was due to report by 11 December 2013. On 11 December 2013, the Senate granted an extension to the reporting date until 31 March 2014.

Telecommunications Legislation Amendment (Submarine Cable Protection) Bill 2013

The inquiry will examine the [Telecommunications Legislation Amendment \(Submarine Cable Protection\) Bill 2013](#) with regards to the vulnerability of Australia's telecommunications cables carrying international and domestic traffic to interception has been the subject of recent reporting.

It is unclear whether the oversight mechanisms proposed are sufficient and whether the streamlining of permits processes outlined improve the security of this telecommunications infrastructure.

Schedule 3A to the Act currently sets out a regulatory scheme that only captures cables that enter Australia's territorial sea and land in Australia. The aim of the regime is to minimise the risk to submarine cables from human activity, particularly some kinds of fishing, anchoring of vessels and dredging.

Schedule 3A gives the industry regulator, ACMA, the power to establish protection zones around existing or planned submarine cables of national significance and regulate activities of vessels and persons within protection zones.

Schedule 3A also establishes an installation permit system for international submarine cables connecting to Australia.

The closing date for submissions is 15 February 2014.

The Committee is due to report by 31 March 2014.

Senate Environment and Communications References Committee

[Committee homepage](#) | [Committee membership](#)

The Government's Direct Action Plan

An inquiry into the Abbott Government's Direct Action Plan and the Abbott Government's failure to systematically address climate change, including the fiscal and economic impact of the Direct Action Plan and whether it has the capacity to deliver adequate greenhouse gas emissions reductions, the effect of technical issues that arise for measuring abatement under the Direct Action Plan, the impact of the absence of policy certainty derived from the Direct Action Plan, and the impact of the abolition of the Clean Energy Finance Corporation.

In undertaking this inquiry the committee must have regard to the Climate Change Authority's draft report, [Reducing Australia's Greenhouse Gas Emissions – Targets and Progress Review](#).

The terms of reference are available [here](#).

The closing date for submissions is 20 January 2014.

The Committee is due to report by 24 March 2014.

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

[Committee homepage](#) | [Committee membership](#)

Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Above the Line Voting) Bill 2013

On Thursday, 12 December 2013, the Senate adopted the report of the Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration and has therefore referred the Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Above the Line Voting) Bill 2013 to the Electoral Matters Committee for inquiry and report.

Further information on this inquiry is provided on page 20.

Senate Finance and Public Administration References Committee

[Committee homepage](#) | [Committee membership](#)

Commonwealth procedures for procurement

The inquiry was established on established on 14 November 2013 and will report on the current ratio of Australian goods and services versus imported goods and services utilised by the Commonwealth through procurement procedures.

In particular, it will examine the effectiveness of current policies and procedures for procurement in Commonwealth departments and agencies, including oversight and scrutiny, cost, and requirements relating to transparency and information-sharing. It will also look at the economic, social and environmental benefits of utilising Australian goods and services

The closing date for submissions is 31 December 2013.

The Committee is due to report by the first sitting day in March 2014.

Senate order for departmental and agency contracts

The Committee will examine the operation of the Senate order for departmental and agency contracts, including developments in the online reporting on contracts (including Austender) which may be relevant enabling departments and agencies to meet the requirements of the order and the role of, and reporting by, the Auditor-General under the order.

The terms of reference are available [here](#).

Submissions are currently open.

The Committee is due to report by 14 May 2014.

Senate Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade Legislation Committee

[Committee homepage](#) | [Committee membership](#)

Defence Legislation Amendment (Woomera Prohibited Area) Bill 2013

The [Defence Legislation Amendment \(Woomera Prohibited Area\) Bill 2013](#) was introduced as a private senators' bill by Senator the Hon Don Farrell. Senator the Hon Mitch Fifield has indicated that the government is in the process of preparing an amended version of the bill for the autumn 2014 sitting. The Bill gives effect to the recommendations made in the Final Report of the Review of the Woomera Prohibited Area, which were accepted by the former Labor Government in May 2011.

The Review recommended that Defence remain the primary user of the area, but proposed that the Woomera Prohibited Area be opened up for resources exploration and mining. The SA Government has assessed that over the next decade about \$35 billion worth of development including iron ore, gold and other projects would be possible.

During the 43rd Parliament, the committee conducted an inquiry into a substantially similar bill (with the same name), available [here](#).

The closing date for submissions is 31 January 2013.

The Committee is due to report by 11 February 2014.

Fair Trade (Workers' Rights) Bill 2013

The [Fair Trade \(Workers' Rights\) Bill 2013](#) seeks to encourage Australia's trading partners to ensure that their workers are protected by internationally accepted minimum standards on workers' rights.

The closing date for submissions is 14 February 2014.

The Committee is due to report by 4 March 2014.

Implementation of the Defence Trade Controls Legislation

The [Defence Trade Controls Bill 2011](#) was introduced to give effect to the 2007 Australia-United States Defence Trade Co-operation Treaty, which aims to reduce administrative burdens on Australian-US defence trade.

During the 24 month transition period for the bill, the Committee is conducting a six-monthly examination of progress of the implementation of the provisions of the bill and report to the Senate. This decision was made in response to [ongoing concerns held by stakeholders](#).

The *Defence Trade Controls Bill 2011 [Provisions] Final Report (October 2012)* is available [here](#).

The First Progress Report is available [here](#).

Senate Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade References Committee [Committee homepage](#) | [Committee membership](#)

Australia's overseas aid and development assistance program

In light of the Government's \$4.5 billion cut to international development assistance, the inquiry will examine Australia's overseas aid and development assistance program with particular reference to Australia's ability to deliver aid against stated policy objectives and international commitments, our ability to maintain our international development priorities, including sectoral, regional, bilateral and multilateral international relationships, and the integration of AusAID into the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the freeze in international development assistance funding.

The terms of reference are available [here](#).

The closing date for submissions is 7 February 2014.

The Committee is due to report by 20 March 2014.

Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee

[Committee homepage](#) | [Committee membership](#)

Criminal Code Amendment (Harming Australians) Bill 2013

The [Criminal Code Amendment \(Harming Australians\) Bill 2013](#) extends existing provisions under the Criminal Code Act 1995 that make it an offence to harm Australians overseas. The original provisions were introduced in October 2002, following the Bali bombings. The aim of these provisions was to allow for prosecution of individuals who harm Australians outside Australia (either through murder or manslaughter, or through intentional or reckless behaviour) to be brought to justice.

These provisions commenced on 1 October 2002, and apply only to offences committed after this date. This Bill gives the Act retrospective operation.

The closing date for submissions is 21 January 2014.

The Committee is due to report by 4 March 2014.

Criminal Code Amendment (Misrepresentation of Age to a Minor) Bill 2013

The inquiry will examine the [Criminal Code Amendment \(Misrepresentation of Age to a Minor\) Bill 2013](#), which makes it an offence for a person who is over 18 years of age to misrepresent their age to a person they reasonably believe to be under 16 years of age and applies to online communication.

The Committee is due to report by 19 February 2014.

Migration Amendment (Regaining Control Over Australia's Protection Obligations) Bill 2013

The Committee will inquire into [the Migration Amendment \(Regaining Control Over Australia's Protection Obligations\) Bill 2013](#) which amends the Migration Act 1958 to remove the criterion for grant of a protection visa on "complementary protection" grounds, and other related provisions.

Complementary protection is the term used to describe a category of protection for people who are not refugees as defined in the Refugees Convention as amended by the Refugees Protocol, but who also cannot be returned to their home country, because there is a real risk that they would suffer significant types of harm that would engage Australia's international non-refoulement obligations under certain other treaties.

The closing date for submissions is 23 January 2014.

The Committee is due to report by 3 March 2014.

Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee

[Committee homepage](#) | [Committee membership](#)

A Claim of Public Interest Immunity Raised over Documents

The Committee will examine a claim of public interest immunity raised over documents tabled by the Assistant Minister for Immigration and Border Protection (Senator Cash), on 4 December 2013, in response to an order for production of documents and other documents she tabled in relation to other orders for production of documents concerning immigration policy (Operation Sovereign Borders).

The Committee will have particular reference to the specific matters of public interest immunity being claimed by the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection and the authority of the Senate to determine the application of claims of public interest immunity.

The terms of reference are available [here](#).

The closing date for submissions is 14 January 2014.

The Committee is due to report by 21 February 2014.

Comprehensive revision of Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act 1979

The Committee will undertake a comprehensive revision of the Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act 1979, with regard to: the recommendations of the Australian Law Reform Commission For [Your Information: Australian Privacy Law and Practice report](#), particularly recommendation 71.2, and recommendations relating to the Act from the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security Inquiry into [the potential reforms of Australia's National Security Legislation report](#), May 2013.

The terms of reference are available [here](#).

The closing date for submissions is 27 February 2014.

The Committee is due to report by 10 June 2014.

Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

[Committee homepage](#) | [Committee membership](#)

Infrastructure Australia Amendment Bill 2013

The Committee will examine the [Infrastructure Australia Amendment Bill 2013](#), announced on 20 November 2013 by the Hon. Warren Truss MP, which will re-establish Infrastructure Australia as a separate entity under the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997* (Cth). As such, Infrastructure Australia will become an independent governing entity that is both legally and financially separate from the Commonwealth.

The Bill provides greater detail on the functions of Infrastructure Australia: general functions, the evaluation of infrastructure proposals, the development of Infrastructure Plans and the provision of advice on infrastructure matters. However, the Bill also further limits the functions of Infrastructure Australia that can be undertaken without a Ministerial directive.

The closing date for submissions is 20 January 2014.

The Committee is due to report by 17 March 2014.

Hawker Britton's Occasional Paper on Infrastructure Australia is available [here](#).

Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee

[Committee homepage](#) | [Committee membership](#)

Role of public transport in delivering productivity outcomes

The Committee will examine the need for an integrated approach across road and rail in addressing congestion in cities, including Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth, the social and environmental benefits of public transport projects compared to road infrastructure projects such as WestConnex and the East-West Link and the national significance of public transport.

The Committee will also look at the relationship between public transport and building well-functioning cities, the decision of the Federal Government to refuse to fund public transport projects and the impact on user charges arising from requiring states to fund public transport projects.

The terms of reference are available [here](#).

The closing date for submissions is 30 January 2014.

The Committee is due to report by 27 March 2014.

Future of the beekeeping and pollination service industries in Australia

The Committee will look at the importance of beekeeping and pollination service industries from a food security, environmental and financial point of view. It will have regard to the current challenges facing the beekeeping industry domestically and internationally, and its future sustainability and will examine the adequacy of the current biosecurity arrangements for imported and exported honey, apiary products, package bees and queen bees.

The Committee will also examine Australia's food labelling requirements, and how these affect the beekeeping industry.

In its inquiry, the Committee will have regard to the recommendations from the House Standing Committee on Primary Industries and Resources 2008 report [More than Honey; the future of the Australian honey bee and pollination industries](#), and the Rural Affairs and Transport References Committee 2011 report [Science underpinning the inability to eradicate the Asian honey bee](#).

The terms of reference are available [here](#).

The closing date for submissions is 7 February 2014.

The Committee is due to report by 26 March 2014.

Industry structures and systems governing levies on grass-fed cattle

The Committee is tasked with an examination of the industry structures and systems governing the collection and disbursement of marketing and research and development levies pertaining to the sale of grass-fed cattle set out in subsections 6(1)(a), 6(1)(b), 6(2)(a) and 6(2)(b) of Schedule 3 (Cattle transactions) of the [Primary Industries \(Excise\) Levies Act 1999](#).

The terms of reference are available [here](#).

The closing date for submissions is 30 January 2014.

The Committee is due to report by 28 March 2014.

Implications of the use of Fenthion on Australia's horticultural industry

The implications of the restriction on the use of Fenthion on Australia's horticultural industry, including the roles and responsibilities of relevant departments and agencies of Commonwealth, State and Territory governments in relation to the regulation of pesticides and veterinary chemicals, the short- and long-term impact of the decision on stakeholders, the effectiveness and sustainability of chemicals other than Fenthion to manage fruit fly and transition arrangements following the restriction on the use of Fenthion, including Area Wide Management.

The terms of reference are available [here](#).

The closing date for submissions is 28 January 2014.

The Committee is due to report by 25 June 2014.

Review of the Citrus Industry in Australia

On 28 February 2013 the Senate referred a review of the domestic citrus industry to the Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport for inquiry and report. On 14 November 2013 the Senate agreed to the Committee's recommendation that this inquiry be re-adopted in the 44th Parliament.

The review will report on the scale and structure of the citrus industry, opportunities and inhibitors for growth of the industry domestically, competition and efficiency in the Australian market, and opportunities and inhibitors for export growth.

The terms of reference are available [here](#).

The Committee is due to report by 28 March 2014.

The Interim Report is available [here](#). The Further Interim Report is available [here](#).

Inquiries on imported food products

The three inquiries below were all referred to the Committee within a three-month period, and shared similar reporting dates. However, the Committee resolved to conduct hearings for each of the inquiries separately.

The Committee has now made the decision to amalgamate the three reports and table them together as a single report. The committee noted that this approach would enable the recurring theme common to each of these inquiries (the operation of [DAFF Biosecurity's Risk Estimation Matrix](#)) to be a central focus, whilst at the same time allowing for detailed consideration of the significant and specific issues relevant to each separate inquiry.

The effect on Australian ginger growers of importing fresh ginger from Fiji

The inquiry reports on the effect on Australian ginger growers of importing fresh ginger from Fiji, in particular the scientific basis for and the adequacy of the current pest risk assessments, the adequacy of the quarantine conditions and the risk and consequences of the importation resulting possibly in the introduction of pest species or diseases and soil-borne disease.

On 14 November 2013 the Senate agreed to the Committee's recommendation that this inquiry be re-adopted in the 44th Parliament.

The Committee is due to report by 28 February 2014.

The terms of reference are available [here](#).

The First Interim Report is available [here](#). The Second Interim Report is available [here](#). The Third Interim Report is available [here](#).

The effect on Australian pineapple growers of importing fresh pineapple from Malaysia

This inquiry examines the effect on Australian pineapple growers of importing fresh pineapple from Malaysia, in particular the scientific basis on which the provisional final import risk analysis report regarding the importation of fresh, decrowned pineapple has been developed, the risk and consequences of the importation possibly resulting in the introduction of pest species and the adequacy of the current quarantine conditions.

The First Interim Report is available [here](#). The Second Interim Report is available [here](#). The Third Interim Report is available [here](#). The Fourth Interim Report is available [here](#).

The proposed importation of potatoes from New Zealand

The Committee will report on the validity and supporting scientific evidence underpinning the Pest Risk Analysis included in the New Zealand Potatoes Import Risk Analysis 2009 and the extent of scientific knowledge and understanding of the Tomato/Potato Psyllid and other pests identified in the Draft Review of Import Conditions.

The First Interim Report is available [here](#). The Second Interim Report is available [here](#). The Third Interim Report is available [here](#).

House Committees

House Standing Committee on Infrastructure and Communications

[Committee homepage](#) | [Committee membership](#)

Inquiry into High Speed Rail Planning Authority Bill 2013

On Thursday 12 December 2013, the House Selection Committee referred a private member's bill to the Committee for inquiry and report - *the High Speed Rail Planning Authority Bill 2013*.

On 9 December 2013 Shadow Minister for Infrastructure the Hon. Anthony Albanese MP introduced a private member's bill to protect the 1 748 kilometre rail corridor for the HSR project.

The Bill would establish the High-Speed Rail Planning Authority as a vehicle for long-term Commonwealth leadership to progress this project, made up of federal, state and industry stakeholders. The body would be similar to the High Speed Rail Advisory Group established by the former Labor Government which was abolished by the Coalition Government.

The terms of reference are the text of the bill, which can be accessed, together with the explanatory memorandum and the second reading speech, are available [here](#).

The Hawker Britton Occasional Paper on High Speed Rail is available [here](#).

House Standing Committee on Tax and Revenue

[Committee homepage](#) | [Committee membership](#)

Inquiry into the 2013 Annual Report of the Australian Taxation Office

The Committee will inquire into and report on the 2013 Annual Report of the Australian Taxation Office.

The 2013 ATO Annual Report is available [here](#).

Joint Committees

a) Joint Committees Administered by the House of Representatives

Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters

[Committee homepage](#) | [Committee membership](#)

Inquiry into the Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Above the Line Voting) Bill 2013

The inquiry was established on established on 14 November 2013 and will report on the [Commonwealth Electoral Amendment \(Above the Line Voting\) Bill 2013](#). The purpose of the bill is to reform the current preferential voting system to remove group voting tickets for the Senate—essentially preference deals—and make it easier for voters to demonstrate their democratic will.

It does this by creating an optional preferential system above and below the line. The structure of the existing ballot paper will be maintained, with group squares above the line and individual candidate squares below the line.

Senator Xenophon's second reading speech is available [here](#).

The closing date for submissions is 31 December 2013.

The Committee is due to report by the first sitting Wednesday in March 2014.

Inquiry into and report on all aspects of the conduct of the 2013 Federal Election and matters related thereto.

The Committee will inquire into and report on all aspects of the conduct of the 2013 Federal Election and matters related thereto.

The closing date for submissions is 7 March 2014.

The Inquiry website is available [here](#).

Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence and Security

[Committee homepage](#) | [Committee membership](#)

Review of Administration and Expenditure No. 12 (2012 - 2013) - Australian Intelligence Agencies

The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security is required under Section 29 (1)(a) of the [Intelligence Services Act 2001](#), to conduct an annual review of the administration, expenditure and financial statements of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS), Defence Signals Directorate (DSD), Defence Intelligence Organisation (DIO), Defence Imagery Geospatial Organisation (DIGO) and the Office of National Assessments (ONA).

The closing date for submissions is 21 February 2014.

Review of the re-listing of Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula

The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security resolved to inquire into and report on the Review of the re-listing of Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula.

Section 102.1A of [the Criminal Code Act 1995](#) provides that the Committee may review a regulation which lists an organisation as a terrorist organisation and report its comments and recommendations to each House of the Parliament before the end of the applicable disallowance period for the House. The disallowance period is 15 sitting days from the day the regulation is tabled.

The closing date for submissions is 10 January 2014.

Review of the listing of Jabhat al-Nusra and the re-listing of six terrorist organisations

The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security resolved to inquire into and report on the Review of the listing of Jabhat al-Nusra and the re-listing of six terrorist organisations: Abu Sayyaf Group, Al-Qa'ida, Al-Qa'ida in Iraq, Al-Qa'ida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb, Jamiat ul-Ansar and Jemaah Islamiyah.

The statements of reason for each organisation can be accessed [here](#).

As mentioned above, Section 102.1A of [the Criminal Code Act 1995](#) provides that the Committee may review a regulation which lists an organisation as a terrorist organisation and report its comments and recommendations to each House of the Parliament before the end of the applicable disallowance period for the House. The disallowance period is 15 sitting days from the day the regulation is tabled.

The closing date for submissions is 10 January 2014.

Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories

[Committee homepage](#) | [Committee membership](#)

Review of the National Capital Authority: Biannual Public Briefings

The Committee is empowered to inquire into the National Capital Authority (NCA) through its Resolution of Appointment which provides for the Annual Reports of the NCA to stand referred to the Committee for any inquiry the Committee may resolve to adopt. The committee is committed to holding a public hearing with the NCA every six months to canvass matters of interest.

The most recent briefing was held on 13 February 2014.

Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia

[Committee homepage](#) | [Committee membership](#)

The Committee will consider policies for developing the parts of Australia which lie north of the Tropic of Capricorn, spanning Western Australia, Northern Territory and Queensland.

In its inquiry, the Committee will examine the potential for development of the region's mineral, energy, agricultural, tourism, defence and other industries. It will also provide recommendations to enhance trade and other investment links with the Asia-Pacific, establish a conducive regulatory, taxation and economic environment, address impediments to growth and set conditions for private investment and innovation.

The Committee will also identify the critical economic and social infrastructure needed to support the long term growth of the region, and ways to support planning and investment in that infrastructure.

White Paper

The Committee to also present to the Parliament its recommendation for a white paper to detail government action needed to be taken to implement the its recommendations, setting out how the recommendations were to be implemented, by which government entity they should be implemented, a timetable for implementation and how and when any government funding would be sourced.

The closing date for submissions is 17 February 2014.

Public hearings will be held across Northern Australia.

The Committee is due to present an interim report as soon as practicable after 30 May 2014.

The Committee is due to deliver its final report and recommendations to the Parliament on or before 6 July 2014.

Joint Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Audit

[Committee homepage](#) | [Committee membership](#)

Inquiry into Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 Rules Development

The Committee will report on the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) rules development. The Committee will consider the process for the development of the rules, the impact of the rules, and the purpose of the rules in the context of the broader Public Management Reform Agenda.

The Committee's inquiry is a separate process from the initial consultation process on the proposed rules undertaken by the Department of Finance. Following this initial consultation process the Department of Finance will be submitting updated draft rules to the Committee, which the Committee intends to publish on its website on 5 March 2014

The closing date for submissions is 24 March 2014.

Review of the 2012-13 Defence Materiel Organisation Major Projects Report

The Committee will report on the 2012-13 Defence Materiel Organisation Major Projects Report (MPR) by the Australian National Audit Office. The objective of the MPR is to provide the Auditor-General's independent assurance over the status of selected Major Projects, as reflected in the Project Data Summary Sheets (PDSSs) prepared by the DMO, and the Statement by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) DMO.

The MPR is available [here](#).

A public hearing will be held Thursday 20 March 2014, 10:45am - 12:30 pm at Canberra: Parliament House, Committee Room 2R1.

Report No. 53 (2012-13) on Agencies Implementation of Performance Audit Recommendations, together with Report No. 25 (2012-13) Defence's Implementation of Audit Recommendations; and Report No. 6 (2013-14) on Capability Development Reform (Current)

Committee will review the following ANAO audit reports in detail:

- [Audit Report No.53 \(2012–13\) Agencies' Implementation of Performance Audit Recommendations](#)
- [Audit Report No.25 \(2012–13\) Defence's Implementation of Audit Recommendations](#)
- [Audit Report No. 6 \(2013–14\) on Capability Development Reform](#)

A public hearing will be held Thursday 6 March 2014, 10:45am - 12:30pm Canberra: Parliament House, Committee Room 2R1

Joint Standing Committee on Public Works

[Committee homepage](#) | [Committee membership](#)

Construction of a new Australian High Commission in Nairobi, Kenya

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) proposes to construct a purpose-built new Australian High Commission complex on Commonwealth-owned land in the suburb of Rosslyn, approximately 15 kilometres from the Nairobi city centre. This facility will serve as Australia's ongoing permanent mission to Kenya. It will replace the existing chancery building, which no longer meets the security, operational and accommodation needs of the represented agencies.

Works are expected to commence in early 2016 with the project complete by mid-2018. The estimated cost of the project is \$57.6 million.

The closing date for submissions is 24 January 2014.

The Committee will conduct public and in-camera hearings for the inquiry in February 2014.

Full details on the project are available on the Committee's website: www.aph.gov.au/pwc

CSIRO Clayton Property Strategy, Clayton, Victoria

The CSIRO proposes to relocate its staff and research from Highett Melbourne to its Clayton Site adjacent to Monash University. The project includes the refurbishment and fit-out of some existing facilities at Clayton and North Clayton; the relocation of staff and specialist science equipment; and the construction of the Factories of the Future Innovation (FoFi) Centre at Clayton. This will consolidate CSIRO's support facilities and research capability and reduce CSIRO's building footprint and reduce overall building operation, management and maintenance costs.

Construction is scheduled to commence in June 2014. It is scheduled to be completed by September 2015 for the Highett Relocation component of the project, and by December 2015 for the FoFi component. Staff are expected to be relocated by December 2015.

The estimated cost of the project is \$32 million.

24 January 2014.

The Committee will conduct public and in-camera hearings for the inquiry in February 2014.

Full details on the project are available on the Committee's website: www.aph.gov.au/pwc

CSIRO Consolidation Project, Australian Capital Territory

The CSIRO proposes to relocate staff and operations from three leased sites in the ACT to its owned Black Mountain site, and undertake demolition and refurbishment works to provide modern facilities at the Black Mountain site. This will provide significant financial savings to CSIRO and health and safety benefits to staff.

The project will be undertaken in two phases. Phase 1 construction is scheduled to commence in July 2014 and be completed by April 2016. Phase 2 construction is scheduled to commence in September 2017 and be completed by March 2019.

The estimated cost of the project is \$195.6 million

The closing date for submissions is 24 January 2014.

Full details on the project are available on the Committee's website: www.aph.gov.au/pwc

Development and construction of housing for Defence at RAAF Base Tindal, Northern Territory

Defence Housing Australia (DHA) proposes to construct 50 new tropically designed dwellings and associated supporting roads and infrastructure for use by Defence personnel and their families. The dwellings will be constructed on RAAF Base Tindal, 18 kilometres from Katherine. Housing is in short supply in Katherine and Tindal, and the construction of new housing is intended to meet Defence standards for housing of personnel.

Works are expected to commence in August 2014, with the project complete by June 2016. The estimated cost of the project is \$89.4 million.

The estimated cost of the project is \$195.6 million

The closing date for submissions is 24 January 2014.

The Committee will conduct public and in-camera hearings for the inquiry in the Northern Territory on 31 January 2014.

Reserve Bank of Australia, National Banknote Site, Craigieburn, Victoria

The Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) proposes to construct a new, purpose-built, National Banknote Site (NBS) on vacant land at the RBA's existing Craigieburn site. The current storage, distribution and processing capacity at the Bank's Sydney, Melbourne and Craigieburn sites is insufficient to enable the Bank to store and issue the new series of banknotes or to accommodate banknote growth in the medium term.

The objective is to deliver a fit-for-purpose facility that will be fully operational by early 2017 to enable the transition to the Next Generation Banknote (NGB) series and meet the Bank's banknote storage, distribution and processing requirements for the next 25 years.

Works are expected to commence in late 2014, with the project complete by February 2017.

The estimated cost of the project is \$72 million.

The closing date for submissions is 24 January 2014.

The Committee will conduct public and in-camera hearings for the inquiry in February 2014.

Full details on the project are available on the Committee's website: www.aph.gov.au/pwc

b) Joint Committees Administered by the Senate

Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme

[Committee homepage](#) | [Committee membership](#)

The committee is tasked with:

- a) reviewing the implementation of the NDIS;
- b) reviewing the administration and expenditure of the NDIS;
- c) reviewing any matter in relation to the NDIS referred to the committee by a resolution of either House of the Parliament;

The committee's focus is therefore on the implementation and administration of the scheme.

Unless otherwise stated, the committee will only accept submissions and correspondence that are directly and principally related to the implementation and administration of the NDIS. The case for the NDIS was already examined by the Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs [inquiry into the National Disability Insurance Scheme Bill 2012](#).

The Committee is currently accepting submissions.

The Committee is reports by 30 June each year.

Further information

The Hawker Britton Occasional Paper on Parliamentary Committees and inquiries is available [here](#).

The Hawker Britton guide to participating in Parliamentary inquiries is available [here](#).

The Senate Committee homepage can be accessed [here](#).