



Parliament of Australia

Parliamentary Budget Office

Supporting Australian democracy

Presentation to
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Presentation outline

- Purpose of the PBO
- PBO resourcing
- Rationale for the PBO
- Services for parliamentarians
- Public reports
- Confidentiality
- Experience to date

Purpose of the PBO

- To inform the Parliament by providing independent and non-partisan analysis of the budget cycle, fiscal policy and the financial implications of policies
- The Parliamentary Budget Officer is an independent statutory officer of the Parliament
- PBO does not provide policy advice
- PBO commenced operations on 23 July 2012

PBO resourcing

- Budget
 - AUD 7 million per annum
 - Additional AUD 0.5 million every third year
 - Special appropriation AUD 5 million
- Staffing
 - Funded for approximately 40 full time staff
 - Expanded to approximately 50 staff for the 2016 election

Rationale for the PBO

- To provide a more level playing field for non-government parties and independent parliamentarians
- To improve the accuracy of election commitment costings
- To improve the transparency of budget information and fiscal policy settings

Services for parliamentarians

- Costings of policy proposals; may be confidential except in election caretaker period
- Budget analyses and information; may be confidential at all times
- Submissions to parliamentary inquiries; must be made public

Public reports

- After a general election, PBO reports publicly on the budget impact of election commitments of parliamentary parties
- Publish own research on the budget and fiscal policy settings
- Focus on budget sustainability and transparency

Confidentiality

- PBO documents and related documents held by other agencies exempt from the Freedom of Information Act
- MOU between PBO and Heads of Commonwealth Bodies re PBO's access to information has strict confidentiality clauses
- Government protocols require Ministers not to ask and Departmental Heads not to tell
- PBO has strict physical and IT security

Experience to date

- The playing field is now more level for all parliamentarians
 - Strong demand for PBO costings and budget analyses
- Election commitment costings more accurate
 - Parties have confidence to release costed election platforms prior to polling day
- Transparency has been improved
 - PBO post-election report of election commitments
 - PBO research reports, eg Structural Budget Balance; medium-term budget projections; see www.pbo.gov.au

Questions?