

# Evaluation of the Pre-Election Policy service, Australian Parliamentary Library

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**Report**

**November 2010**

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# 1 Executive Summary

The Pre-Election Policy Unit (PEPU) in the Parliamentary Library was funded in the 2010-11 Federal Budget to “enhance the capacity of the Parliamentary Library to assist non-Government parties in developing policies in the lead-up to federal elections”.

The Library aimed to ensure that the PEPU provided services that would not otherwise be provided by the Library in its usual course of business. This objective was delivered successfully.

The main role clients perceived for the PEPU was to obtain costing and modelling of the impacts of proposed policies. Although they made little distinction between the PEPU and the Library, they did see the products delivered by PEPU as different to the kinds of information and analysis they normally received from the Library, and as an important and valuable aid to parliamentarians.

The Unit operated under principles approved by the Joint Standing Committee on the Parliamentary Library in June 2010. It provided assistance to Opposition, Green and independent parliamentarians.

There was a relatively small number of requests in the period between the establishment of the Unit in early July and the announcement of the election on 17 July, followed by the election itself on 21 August. Had the election been held late in 2010 or early in 2011 then the Unit would most likely have had a higher volume of requests for assistance in the intervening period.

The PEPU facilitated the provision of costing and economic modelling through use of external consultants. Clients put a high value on access to this external advice.

The process for engagement of external consultants complied with procurement guidelines and was conducted efficiently. The Unit encouraged as much of a competitive bidding process among potential suppliers as was practical in the limited timeframe available. It was not an ideal process – exemption from open tendering under the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines was required on grounds of urgency, and in the tight timetable involved some providers approached were unable to bid. A more open process for seeking expressions of interest from providers in provision of these services would have been preferable, but was not possible given the timetable for reports to be provided before the election.

As it was, there were some difficulties experienced with suppliers not being able to meet contracted deadlines, which meant that in some instances clients were not provided with the advice they sought within a timetable that they had been promised. The PEPU maintained close communications with clients about such delays, keeping them informed of progress.

More fundamentally, the overwhelming message from clients was that during an election campaign period is not when costing and modelling is most needed. Although

the kind of advice provided by the PEPU was in principle highly valuable, in practice it was not as useful as it might have been, because of the election timing.

### ***Key findings***

The services provided by the PEPU have the potential to aid considerably in the development of sound and workable policies by non-government parliamentarians. However, the timing of the introduction of the PEPU shortly before an election meant that the potential of the PEPU was not fully realised in 2010.

There is an unmet need for a comparable service to be available to parliamentarians on an ongoing basis. This is likely to be overtaken by discussions on the proposed parliamentary budget office, which is outside the scope of this evaluation. Nevertheless many of the lessons for the future would be equally applicable to that new organisation.

In the event that resource constraints prevent establishment of an ongoing source of costing and modelling support, an earlier timetable for the provision of a PEPU service – 12 to 18 months prior to the last available date for calling of a Federal election – would be an improvement. This would require shifting the allocation of funding already shown in the forward estimates from the 2013-14 financial year to 2012-13.

### ***Recommendations***

1. In the event a parliamentary budget office (PBO) is established, its brief should include provision of the kinds of assistance offered by the PEPU in 2010, such as costing and economic modelling.
2. Reflecting the iterative, interactive nature of policy development, this assistance should be available to parliamentarians on an ongoing basis.
3. In the event parliamentarians had access to costing and economic modelling on an ongoing basis, the funding provided to PEPU would not be anywhere near sufficient to meet demand. Either significant additional funding would be required or a strict rationing mechanism based on a notional division of funding in proportion to parties' representation in the parliament would need to be introduced.
4. A clear outline of the division of roles and responsibilities between the PEPU/PBO and the Parliamentary Library should be formulated and published. The underlying principle needs to be clarity in the separation of roles while still allowing coordination and exchanges of information.
5. A PEPU/PBO should have the capacity, subject to budget constraints, to publish reports on its own initiative on key economic and fiscal issues of general interest.
6. A list of consultants available to provide costing advice, economic modelling, fiscal policy advice and other related services should be selected through an open and competitive tender process.
7. Protocols and procedures for the operation of the PEPU/PBO should be drafted, circulated for consultation, and published.

## 2 Background

### 2.1 The need for Opposition and minor party access to costing and modelling resources

In his policy statement of October 2005 titled *Operation Sunlight – Improving Federal Government budget reporting*, the then Shadow Minister for Finance Lindsay Tanner argued for fair access by non-government parties to costing resources. He suggested that “there are benefits in giving equal access to costing resources well before the issue of writs for an election” and put forward a reform option that the *Charter of Budget Honesty Act 1998* might be amended to “extend the period covered by the costing process to the 12 months prior to the last day on which election writs can be issued.” The statement was re-released, with similar policy conclusions, in April 2006.

In government, as Finance Minister, the Hon. Lindsay Tanner continued to pursue Operation Sunlight reforms. Former Senator Andrew Murray conducted a review and reported to government on his findings in June 2008; the report, together with a government response, was released in December 2008.

Senator Murray supported the call for greater access to costing resources, but also drew attention to potential challenges under the Charter of Budget Honesty arrangements:

“additional costing access will require increased resources. More difficult to resolve are potential conflicts of interest. On the plus side, allowing the Opposition access to Government departments for costings a year out from the election would be good for policymaking and allow the major parties to enter the caretaker period on a more equal footing. On the negative side, potential conflict could arise for the public service if it had to balance two simultaneous requests from the Government and Opposition. As many of the requests for costing outside the caretaker period would be for policies that have not yet been announced, the current approach of receiving requests via the Prime Minister would not be appropriate...

Related to the confidentiality of the costing requests, further conflict for the public service could arise from meeting with the Opposition.”

He also noted that

“While the current system provides for the Opposition to obtain policy costings, at least potentially, it makes no provision for the needs of minor parties to do so... Minor parties are doubly disadvantaged; their inability to seek costings during elections is exacerbated by the lack of staffing resources with which they typically operate.

Expanding access to minor parties has resource and practical implications. Because of the resources required, and the tight time-frames involved, it would seem evident that access to this facility could not be extended to the dozens of political parties and

hundreds of independent candidates contesting an election. If access needs to be restricted in some way, it could either be by a party needing to have parliamentary representation already, or by size of parliamentary political party, or both.”

He recommended that “the Government implement the changes to access for election costings proposed in Operation Sunlight, and investigate options to make provision for reasonable access to these services by minor parties.”

The government response was to note the recommendation. Nevertheless, the issue remained a policy concern, receiving occasional mentions from both parliamentarians and external observers over the following year.

It subsequently became apparent from a decision taken in the 2010 Budget that consideration had been given within government to an alternative means to meet the policy objective while addressing the potential problems identified by Senator Murray.

## **2.2 Establishment of the Pre-Election Policy Unit**

The May 2010 Budget announced that

“The Government will provide \$0.5 million in both 2010-11 and 2013-14 to enhance the capacity of the Parliamentary Library to assist non-Government parties in developing policies in the lead-up to federal elections”. (Budget 2010)

This was an initiative of the government, not a result of a submission from the Department of Parliamentary Services or the Library. The Parliamentary Librarian was asked at the Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee on 18 October (Senator Bernardi) “Was the library involved in the decision to form a costings unit for the development of policies by non-government parties?” and answered no<sup>1</sup>; she indicated that shortly before budget night the Library was advised that the measure was to be introduced. The public record does not reveal the source of the proposal that led to government announcement of the measure.

To give effect to the measure the Library established the Pre-Election Policy Unit, from 1 July 2010. The Unit operated under principles approved by the Joint Standing Committee on the Parliamentary Library (JSCPL) on 17 June 2010. These principles are set out at Attachment A. The Unit reported directly to the Parliamentary Librarian.

As part of the process of pre-election policy development, the Unit indicated publicly to parliamentarians that it would “assist non-Government Senators and Members with queries relating to costings, economic modelling and other more complex social or economic matters, on which it is appropriate to draw on expertise outside the Parliamentary Library”.

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<sup>1</sup> Senate Hansard, 18 October 2010, Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee, Estimates Hearing, p22.

The new funding enabled the Library to draw on additional resources that would not normally be available. As part of the new service, the Library commissioned research papers and technical advice from consultants on election policy related matters on behalf of non-Government Senators and Members. Other requests were handled through existing processes within the Parliamentary Library.

From the outset, a principle applied by the Library was that the PEPU would deliver services that were not “business as usual”; that is, that the additional funding provided in the Budget would be applied to provision of services that parliamentarians would otherwise not be able to obtain from the Library in the normal course of events.

The Library advertised internally for a director, and subsequently selected a director and assistant director for the Unit. These staff were seconded from the Parliamentary Library, which meant that there was potential for backfilling their positions<sup>2</sup>.

A separate budget was allocated for the work of PEPU, and staff time on PEPU activities was recorded against this item in the Library time management system. Records were kept of all PEPU expenditure.

In the initial stages of PEPU operation there was a minor proportion of the work of the staff members concerned carried over from their previous roles in the Library – this was billed against the relevant projects, and not funded from the PEPU budget.

The budget for the Unit became available from the start of the financial year, 1 July 2010. It became fully operational from 5 July and immediately set about developing a project plan, consultation strategy, a template for its briefings and examining procurement options.

The principles approved by the JSCPL (see Attachment A) provide in section (g) that “The Library will discuss possible cooperation with the Departments of Finance and Treasury to access information about their economic models”. The Library had preliminary discussions with the Department of Finance and Deregulation, and established a line of communication with senior executive officers in the Budget Framework and Long Term Budget Policy branches. In the event, the nature of the requests received did not require the PEPU to enlist the cooperation of the Treasury and Finance departments.

In estimates hearings<sup>3</sup> the Parliamentary Librarian was asked (Senator Bernardi)

“in establishing this project within the library did you seek advice or guidance from Treasury or the Department of Finance and Deregulation about how to go about modelling, costing and the development of policies?”

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<sup>2</sup> Hansard, *ibid.* p.23

<sup>3</sup> Hansard, *ibid.* p 24

Her response was that

“Partly because of the speed of this, and the nature of it, we used NATSEM and KPMG for modelling because we did not have an arrangement that we could put in place in that period of time for Treasury and Finance. Also we were looking for a level of detail that was not in some of their models [and] we believed there is a significant demand for substantive independent economic analysis of issues...”

In a number of policy arenas these departments (and often other departments with policy responsibility) hold confidential information, and apply their own particular assumptions to assess the effects of proposed policy changes. This means that any alternative models will be likely to produce differing results from the modelling used for the Federal Budget. Given that such differences tend to confuse rather than assist in public debate on policy options, it is desirable that there be a mechanism to facilitate cooperation between the relevant departments and the PEPU or possible future Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO).

The issue did not arise in 2010, so this report does not draw any conclusions about how such cooperation would work in practice. However, the fact that the need did not arise in 2010 is no indication that it will not be required in future. If there is provision of a similar service to the PEPU in the future (potentially over a longer time period or with a larger number of requests for assistance) it is likely that there will be a need for such cooperation. One issue to be considered in provision of a similar service in the future, including through a PBO, is whether there may be a need for legislative provisions to be introduced to ensure such cooperation is provided.

## **2.3 Selection of consultants**

In its first two weeks of operation the PEPU concentrated on consulting potential clients about their likely needs, establishing contacts with the relevant parliamentarians’ offices and meeting where possible with staff likely to be interested in the services of the Unit. In anticipation of likely demand, the Unit had contact with the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM). The Library was already familiar with the work of NATSEM and had used its modelling and reports in the past. The Unit had a meeting with senior staff of NATSEM on 15 July. At that meeting the Unit informed NATSEM that it had been established and NATSEM provided an indication of the sorts of modelling it might potentially undertake.

The Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines (Finance, 2008) apply mandatory procurement procedures to ‘covered’ procurements that exceed a threshold value of \$80,000. There is provision under the guidelines that

8.33 An agency may only conduct procurement through direct sourcing in the following circumstances:

(b) where, for reasons of extreme urgency brought about by events unforeseen by the agency, the property or services could not be obtained in time under open tendering procedures

Because the value of potential contracts for complex modelling work was unknown, as was the timing of the election, the PEPU proposed direct sourcing of consultants on the grounds of extreme urgency. This proposal was approved by the Parliamentary Librarian on 8 July 2010. From the perspective of this evaluation, there appears to be a clear prima facie case that the grounds for urgency were well established – it was obvious from policy debates at the time that demands for assistance from parliamentarians would be highly urgent, and the calling of the election later in July confirmed this judgment. In the event, no individual request for consulting advice exceeded the \$80,000 threshold.

The providers of services were NATSEM and KPMG Econtech, each of which conducted several projects, and Professor Stephen Dowrick who provided a report addressing one request.

The cost of modelling reports ranged from \$14,000 to \$45,000. There were some reports that re-modelled previous work in light of changed parameters, which were provided at a cost ranging between \$4,000 and \$8,000.

The process for engagement of external consultants was conducted efficiently. The Unit contacted suppliers by email and telephone seeking their expression of interest in undertaking the work, and followed up by specifying the request in more detail and obtaining a quote. A standard form contract for external contractors, and in the case of NATSEM a deed of standing offer, were used for the procurements.

The Unit encouraged as much of a competitive bidding process among potential suppliers as was practical in the limited timeframe available. It contacted a number of potential suppliers in relation to the requests it received. In the tight timetable involved some providers approached were unable to bid. However, one firm with modelling expertise that declined to bid did usefully provide PEPU with an indication of the likely budget involved in undertaking the kind of modelling sought. This provided a rough, informal benchmark against which to assess the suitability of the actual quotes received.

There was no formal process for identifying contractors to approach. PEPU staff relied on their own knowledge of suppliers in the market, and asked for recommendations from colleagues in the Parliamentary Library who had in the past had contact with firms with modelling and costing expertise. PEPU contacted firms identified from these sources. There is no indication or suggestion of any favouritism or bias in this process, but it did advantage firms that were well known due to their marketing or public profile, or who had previously provided services to the Parliamentary Library. It also carried the risk of providers becoming aware of the limited pool of consultants who were being approached and pricing their services accordingly.

A more open process for seeking expressions of interest from providers in provision of these services would have been preferable. In principle, an open and competitive tendering process delivers better value for money and higher quality products than a closed process. In this case, it was not possible to conduct an open tender process given the timetable for the work to be completed before the election.

## 2.4 Contract management

The workload required for contract management was directly correlated with the complexity of the requests for assistance received. One request did not involve contract management, but rather the purchase of a proprietary report from its originator. The remaining ten requests required management of a contract with the relevant suppliers.

There were some problems with delivery of services. In one instance the contractor sought to vary the results from a modelling exercise, some days after the report had been provided to the parliamentarian who requested assistance. The PEPU immediately alerted the office of the parliamentarian concerned; the report had not yet found its way into a policy announcement, and so there was no immediately damaging consequence. A replacement report was provided expeditiously.

Nevertheless, there had been a risk that modelling results that in the opinion of the provider were not complete might have been released into the public domain. The PEPU provided feedback to the provider about the problem. It indicates a need in the future for explicit senior level sign-off by providers that their reports are complete and that they will stand by the results.

In another case there were difficulties experienced with two reports where the relevant supplier did not meet contracted deadlines. This meant the clients were not provided with the advice they sought within the timetable originally promised to them.

The PEPU maintained close communications with clients about such delays, keeping them informed of progress.

Clients did understand that they had made quite complex requests, and indicated that they had appreciated being kept informed of delays. As with the previous example, though, there were risks involved for the PEPU, including the risk that the report would be delivered too late to be of any use in policy development.

From a client perspective, a report costing a proposal would not have been particularly helpful if it arrived after the policy was announced; it would have been even more unwelcome if a belated report had shown the announced policy was not economically viable. In the two cases involved, neither risk eventuated. PEPU did have a robust discussion with the supplier about the risks that had been run, and indicate its dissatisfaction.

Some clients interviewed expressed a view that they should have been more involved in commissioning the consultants and in managing the contracts. Clients were able to nominate potential suppliers; however, PEPU was not bound to accept such nominations, given its obligation to obtain best value for money and observe the mandatory tendering requirements that apply to Australian Government agencies.

PEPU both procured and managed the contracts with suppliers, and was an intermediary between the supplier and the end client. This was a positive feature of the arrangements in many respects:

- The funding for this role was provided to the Parliamentary Library, which was therefore accountable and responsible for the use of the funds; the PEPU could monitor and ensure probity in letting contracts, and manage the budget for the unit. There was a risk that direct negotiations could lead to unbudgeted costs.
- The PEPU staff had experience in management of contracts with external suppliers of this nature, and could draw on templates and procedures with which they were familiar and assistance from the Department of Parliamentary Services contract management Section
- The Library has a reputation for standards and quality of output, which provided clients with assurance in relation to the final reports received
- The arms-length nature of the relationship was a reassurance for those providers who were cautious about becoming involved in partisan politics
- Direct contact would have breached the confidentiality arrangements that had been put in place to ensure consultants were not aware of the identity of the party requesting the work
- A direct role for clients in consultant selection would have the potential to open up probity questions, particularly in cases where consultants were known to have political affiliations. It could have been portrayed in the media as tantamount to providing the funding directly to the political parties themselves.

On the other hand, the disadvantages of the arms length arrangement nominated by interviewees included:

- Some clients felt less involved and therefore less confident in the PEPU process
- There were delays involved in testing the market for alternative suppliers rather than directing work to one preferred contractor
- Clients did not always receive the product they needed, because they had no opportunity to meet with the consultant mid-way through the project to check progress and clarify expectations
- Due to the tight time frames a very limited amount of additional value was able to be provided by the PEPU in undertaking additional research (such as international comparisons).

## **2.5 Interactions with the Parliamentary Library**

The Australian Parliamentary Library's services are established under the statutory office of the Parliamentary Librarian primarily to provide high quality information, analysis and advice to Senators and Members of the House of Representatives in support of their parliamentary and representational roles.

The Library's primary clients include Senators and Members and their staff, committee staff and the Governor-General. Service entitlements for all clients are outlined in the Parliamentary Library Statement of Client Services.

Parliamentarians, including those from the PEPU client groups, make extensive use of the Parliamentary Library in the processes of policy development. There is therefore some degree of overlap between the functions of the PEPU and the Library itself. Indeed, the majority of requests initially directed to the PEPU were found to be requests that the Research Branch of the Library could handle.

There was initially some confusion among both Library staff and the staff of parliamentarians about the distinction between the Library and the PEPU. This confusion reduced over time, as it became clear that the Research Branch retained its capacity to assist with the same kinds of policy queries it had always dealt with, and that the PEPU's role was to obtain external assistance with complex requests for costing or modelling. This distinction was as much as anything a product of the Library's approach that the PEPU had been given new funding, and therefore existed to undertake work that was not "business as usual".

However for some clients the confusion never completely dissipated; comments from interviewees included "we did not see the Unit as separate from the Library – it was still the same people" and "there was no difference for us between the PEPU and the Library, we did not make a distinction between them".

Location within the Library did have advantages: the Unit made use of existing systems and information, it was easy to redirect information requests that had mistakenly come to the PEPU, and Library staff were able to assist with advice on processes. Around half of the requests received by the PEPU, many originating from telephone calls, were referred to Library researchers. Some requests to the PEPU came from the Central Entry Point (CEP), a designated point of contact for parliamentarians' queries to the Library

## **2.6 Communications with parliamentarians**

Most clients expressed a view that this was done effectively – that there had been appropriate attention paid to publicising the existence and the role of the Unit. Representative comments included "they did a good job of letting us know they existed".

One client indicated that there had been a deal of confusion at the outset, and a lack of clarity in communications about the role of the Unit and the processes it would adopt; the feedback indicated that this may have been due to a mismatch in that stakeholder's and the JSCPL expectations about the role of the Unit.

Examination of notes for file and emails about the communications efforts early in July confirmed that there was a concerted effort by PEPU staff to promulgate information about their existence and role as widely as possible among parliamentarians. The Parliamentary Librarian emailed all non-government senators and members informing them of the formation of the PEPU; there were reminders in the Librarian's regular 'Library Update' emails to parliamentarians; letters were sent to the leaders of the non-

government parties and to independents; meetings were held with staff from the offices of the Leader of the Opposition, the National Party, the Australian Greens and with Mr. Andrew Robb in his capacity as head of the coalition's policy development committee.

## 2.7 Allocation of expenditure

Spending by the PEPU is shown below:

Expenditure category	\$ (including GST)
Staff costs (including superannuation, actual and accrued leave expenses)	\$111,487
Population paper series	\$16,000
Consultancies	\$230,457
PEPU Evaluation	\$13,860
Other (including promotional materials, training, contributions to Parliamentary Library briefing book, other supplies)	\$12,360
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$384,164</b>

Note: figures incorporate known commitments as at 4 November 2010

The allocation of consultancy funding to the Opposition was roughly in proportion to the parliamentary representation of the Coalition parties among non-government parties. The allocation to the Greens was higher. No specific modelling or costing consultancy work was commissioned in response to requests from independents. The papers commissioned on sustainable population did however arise initially from a request for advice from an independent; interest in the topic was also expressed subsequently from other parliamentarians.

## **3 How well did the PEPU meet client needs?**

### **3.1 Who were the clients?**

One of the first questions to be addressed was who exactly were PEPU clients? The budget measure had specified that the Library had been provided with funding “to assist non-Government parties”. Because the funding was provided to the Library, it was assumed – and never questioned – that this referred to current Federal parliamentarians, the primary pre-existing clients of the Library, rather than non-Government party officials or unelected candidates. The Joint Standing Committee on the Parliamentary Library (JSCPL) took a broad view of the PEPU remit and determined that “the service will take election policy enquiries from all non-Government Senators and Members” (service principle (d) – see Attachment A).

During the course of its work the PEPU received requests via the offices of parliamentarians from the Liberal, National and Greens parties, and one independent. Some offices made multiple requests.

A total of ten requests for costings or modelling were dealt with by the Unit – although this number understates the workload involved in dealing with the requests, because many of them contained multiple parts and options. One request was unable to be dealt with immediately, due to the complex and contested nature of the policy in question, but was handled through commissioning a series of papers to be released after the election. Parliamentarians commissioned consultancy work through the PEPU on various dates between 23 July and 16 August 2010.

The number of parliamentarians’ offices that made requests was small, six in total. This again understates the total number of potential requests because Opposition requests were for the most part filtered through the office of the Opposition Leader, which performed an informal gatekeeping function to ensure that the highest priority areas for investigation were referred to the PEPU. A similar although even less formally defined coordination role applied in relation to requests from the Greens.

All of the offices responsible for these requests were consulted directly or indirectly as part of this evaluation (see Attachment B for methodology).

### **3.2 Client views**

There was a wide divergence in opinions on the question of how well the new service had met client expectations. Some respondents rated the work provided to them by the PEPU very highly; others had reservations.

It should be noted that any reservations expressed did not relate to the people involved: respondents expressed a high regard for the staff members of the PEPU, in many cases mentioning (unprompted) their professionalism. Comments included “extremely helpful”, “very professional”, “decent”, “hardworking people”.

The areas of concern related to the timeliness and responsiveness of the service itself: especially, difficulties caused by the timing of the start-up of the unit being followed shortly after by the start of the election campaign.

Five dimensions of quality of advice were assessed numerically: timeliness, accuracy, responsiveness, confidentiality and independence.

These were rated on a five point scale (see Attachment B for details), where 1 was the best and 5 the worst score, as follows:

Quality dimension	Mean score	Range
Timeliness	3.1	2-5
Accuracy	1.8	1-2
Responsiveness	2.8	1-5
Confidentiality	1.2	1-2
Independence	1.5	1-3

The scoring of these is indicative of broad opinions only, given the small number of respondents. More important is the qualitative assessments of the PEPU provided by interviewees, outlined in more detail below. However, these responses clearly indicate a very high degree of positive consensus among respondents in the ability of the PEPU to maintain confidentiality both of the requests made to it and the responses provided, and a high level of regard for the independence and accuracy of the unit. They also indicate that the areas where there was the greatest divergence of opinions were in relation to timeliness and responsiveness.

### **3.3 Key issues arising from consultations with clients**

#### **3.3.1 Timing - the impact of the election campaign**

The overwhelming message from the interviews was that the PEPU would have been more valuable to its clients if it had been in place well before the election campaign. Representative comments included: “this would have been more useful to us 6 months earlier – as it was, we did not make much use of them”; “advice is needed before an election is called”; “during a campaign time pressures and other demands on politicians make it difficult to use [the Unit]”; “we need assistance to be available on costings well before the campaign”.

The timing was outside the control of the PEPU – which interviewees acknowledged. The timetable for establishment of the PEPU was in fact extraordinarily rapid:

- Funding was provided in the May 2010 Budget

- Principles for the operation of the PEPU were put in place by the Joint Standing Committee on the Parliamentary Library in June 2010
- Funding became available from 1 July, staffing arrangements were made, staff selected, and the Unit was fully operational by 5 July
- Consultations with Opposition and minor parties commenced, and
- In mid July the Parliamentary Librarian informed all parliamentarians and staff via the Library's regular bulletin that the Unit was up and running.

Box 1 – extract from *What's new from the Parliamentary Library* issued 13 July 2010

The Pre-Election Policy Unit, which was formed to assist non-Government senators and members develop policies in the lead-up to federal elections, was established on 1 July 2010. The Unit will operate under principles approved by the Joint Standing Committee on the Parliamentary Library. It is anticipated that the role of the Unit will include commissioning research from external individuals/bodies with expertise in designated fields.

The Unit is in the process of informing non-Government senators and members of the Unit's existence, and hopes soon to be able to consult with them about the role and operation of the new service.

On Saturday 17 July, four days after that bulletin was issued, the Prime Minister announced her intention to hold an election. Writs were issued on Monday 19 July, and the election held on Saturday 21 August.

Inevitably, this timing told against the PEPU – it was established rapidly, and the protocols for its operation were immediately tested in the heated climate of an election campaign.

In interviews with the PEPU staff it was apparent that they had a good understanding of the pressures faced by parliamentarians and staff during a campaign. That understanding however was not always apparent to clients. Some interviewees expressed a view that the PEPU had failed to appreciate the pressures they were under and the urgency involved in an election campaign. As much as anything, this reflects the difficulties of dealing with urgent communications, often conducted by parliamentarians' staff while on the run, in transit between or interrupted by events. Some of the client respondents appreciated these difficulties and noted that communications were always more stretched during the campaign period.

Much more fundamentally, the client dissatisfaction over timing reflects the nature of the policy development process. Policies are developed through an iterative process of identifying problems or issues, gathering information about those, developing hypotheses about appropriate policy responses, testing the viability of those hypotheses, and refining them in light of that further examination. Testing viability of policies

includes questions of affordability and economic impacts – the kinds of questions involving costing and economic modelling that were addressed to the PEPU.

This kind of carefully considered, iterative policy development is not well suited to the time pressures of an election campaign. Yet this is where the PEPU would have been most useful to parliamentarians.

One of the matters referred to the PEPU – relating to sustainable population - was too complex and too highly contested to be able to be handled prior to the election. However, the Unit took the opportunity presented by this request to commission further external work on aspects of the question. The rationale for this as set out on the Parliamentary Library website was as follows:

Population related issues were among the most contentious areas of public debate prior to and during the recent election period. Given its enduring and multifaceted nature, the debate on population is likely to be of continuing policy interest to senators and members of the 43rd Parliament.

The Parliamentary Library commissioned a series of papers from leading authors on a range of aspects of population including the environment, the economy, demographic trends, public opinion, urban transport and international comparisons. The views expressed in these papers do not reflect an official position of the Parliamentary Library, nor do they constitute professional legal opinion<sup>4</sup>.

At time of writing, one of the reports (Stanley, 2010) had been published on the Parliamentary Library website.

### **3.3.2 Responsiveness – whether the PEPU understood clients’ needs**

Clients’ views on responsiveness were very mixed. Some found the PEPU to have had a good understanding of their needs, a grasp of what was required, and an ability to find providers to deliver suitable reports. Others reported that they had found dealing with the PEPU frustrating, because “the Unit did not understand the purpose of the requests” or that “the reports did not hit the mark”.

Two of the interviewees expressed opposite views about whether it was appropriate for the PEPU to advise on the merits of proposals. One said that “if it is a bad idea we expect them to tell us – and they did. This is an important value in the service”. By contrast, another said that “the response we received was that this was not a good idea. It is not the role of the Library to say this”.

This may have reflected differences in respondents’ own experiences of dealing with the PEPU, but there are other possible apparent reasons for the divergence in perspectives apparent from the documentation: in the former case there was less urgency in the

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/PEPU/index.htm#series> viewed 27 October 2010

timetable, so more time for the parliamentarian concerned to develop an alternative; the evidence base in relation to the latter proposal was more polarised; and in that latter case there was also greater uncertainty about the exact details of the policy proposed.

An area of frustration among some clients in relation to the final reports received was the level of uncertainty in the conclusions reached. They understood that modelling was dependent on assumptions, and results were highly sensitive to changes in underlying assumptions. Nevertheless, for the purposes of policy development there was a preference for definitive answers to the policy questions posed.

This is a familiar issue in government policy. In advising Ministers on the outcomes of modelling or costing, one approach commonly adopted by Commonwealth agencies is to provide a single answer to Ministers, based on the agency's judgement of the most likely outcome, together with an indication of the reliability of the estimate and the range of possible alternatives. In many cases a sensitivity analysis can provide an indication of the extent to which estimates will vary depending on different assumptions.

A similar approach could be adopted in relation to modelling provided through the PEPU. This would need to be agreed in advance with contractors. In cases where very different costings or results from economic models arose from use of different assumptions, public debate would be enhanced by making these differences more transparent; that however would require a very different approach to publication of materials by the Unit or any successor (see findings below).

### **3.3.3 Were there other needs that the PEPU could have met?**

As part of the evaluation, views were sought on whether there were other types of product or services that a unit like the PEPU might obtain from consultants to assist parliamentarians in policy development. Responses were mixed.

Some interviewees found this a difficult question to address, noting “we don't pick the policy issues” and “we don't know what is going to be on the government's agenda”.

For other interviewees, the role that emerged for the PEPU of commissioning costing and economic modelling was seen as the best use of the resources provided.

There was no comment either favourable or unfavourable expressed on the population policy series of papers (possibly because to date only one has been published).

### **3.3.4 Other issues**

#### *Confidentiality*

All interviewees expressed an extremely high level of confidence that the Unit would keep their requests confidential. This applied regardless of the use of external consultants – none of the interviewees considered that going outside the Library for advice increased the risks in relation to confidentiality.

The PEPU had advised parliamentarians that reports would be confidential, but in the event that a report or reference to the report was placed on the public record by the party or parliamentarian, the PEPU would publish that report online on its website.

The interviewees who commented on this arrangement did not disagree with the approach, one comment being that it was seen as “fair enough” in the interests of transparency. It did however mean less use was made of the material provided than might otherwise have been.

#### *Coordination*

One comment noted that the coordination of Opposition requests through the office of the leader of the Opposition was extremely helpful in setting priorities and ensuring best use was made of the PEPU.

In a circumstance where there is a much greater number of requests for assistance (assuming a PEPU or similar unit is re-established), consideration could be given to establishing a formal coordination mechanism through the leaders of non-government parties. Such a mechanism would assist in setting priorities among requests; determining priorities between different parliamentarians from the same political party is not an appropriate role for PEPU staff.

#### *Independence*

All interviewees expressed a very high level of confidence that the products of the PEPU, and its processes, were free from any political bias.

There was one concern expressed that the responses to a request were coloured by policy preconceptions about the viability of the particular policy concerned. This had been perceived as influencing the judgement of the PEPU about the usefulness of obtaining external advice on the proposed policy.

### **3.4 Consultants' Perspective**

The consultants used to provide services through the PEPU put a very high value on the role played by the Unit as an intermediary between them and political parties or parliamentarians. The high risks involved in provision of economic advice such as modelling to be used in policy announcements were ameliorated by the protocols put in place by PEPU. The consultants used were very conscious of the need to remain independent and apolitical. They also valued the role of the PEPU in maintaining the confidentiality of the identity of the parliamentarians making the requests. One noted that direct communications with the end clients may have been more efficient “but would have compromised our independence and so would not have been worth it”.

Otherwise, consultants were appreciative of the professionalism and the clarity of their dealings with the PEPU. One comment was that the PEPU ensured that the modellers were under no pressure to provide unsatisfactory or incomplete answers.

Consultants recognised the short timeframes involved in turnaround of requests from parliamentarians. The quick turnaround times, together with the potentially high visibility of the results, meant that consultants for this sort of exercise inevitably faced higher risks than with other work they undertook. The PEPU helped ensure this risk was manageable.

The most difficult area to deal with related to the interaction between the competing values of confidentiality and the desirability of information being in the public domain to assist policy debate.

A lesson for the future suggested in the discussions with consultants would be to allow publication of reports or modelling results on the websites of the authoring consultants at the same time that these were published by the Parliamentary Library. The feedback from one consultant suggested that there had been instances of media incorrectly asserting modelling results were being kept secret because the journalist(s) concerned had been unable to find them on the website of the consultant, even though they were available on the Library website. Rather than parallel publishing, another easier solution would be to allow the provider of a report or similar deliverable to publish a link to document on the Parliamentary Library website when it is published there.

Overall, the consultants were highly supportive of the service provided by the Unit and considered the provision of independent advice to parliamentarians to meet an important unfulfilled need. They did however echo the comments of clients of the service that ideally such a service should be available much earlier in the policy development process, and well before an election campaign.

## 4 Key findings and lessons for the future

### 4.1 Funding

The PEPU budget of \$500,000 provided sufficient resources to meet demand, but only because the election was held early in the 2010-11 financial year. Had the election been held later, it is unlikely that the Unit would have been able to respond to all of the requests for assistance it received.

This suggests that any future exercise of this nature would require either a larger budget or a rationing mechanism to ensure that scarce resources are applied to the projects of most value to parliamentarians. One stakeholder suggested both were needed.

One possible rationing mechanism would be to allocate the budget in proportion to party and independent representation in the parliament. In 2010, the eventual outcome was that “79 per cent of the total expenditure on modelling was for the coalition, which is roughly proportional to the amount of senators and members who are in the coalition compared to the Greens, minor parties and Independents”<sup>5</sup>.

A notional budget based on representation would require the Unit (or any organisation that adopted the same functions) to advise parties/independents of the amount they had been allocated, monitor usage of this notional budget, and regularly update the parties/independents concerned. It would also require the Unit, when it obtained a quotation for provision of advice on a request, to advise the originator of the request before it was processed. This would allow parliamentarians to decide not to pursue a request if they felt it was too costly, or too large a portion of their remaining budget, in relation to the potential benefit of receiving the assistance sought.

An alternative rationing mechanism would be to process requests in order of receipt until the budget was exhausted. Queuing is rarely a good rationing device; applied to this sort of activity, it would run the risk of spending most of the available budget on low priority requests early, and encourage gaming of the system as parliamentarians or their staff strove to be at the head of the queue for assistance.

### 4.2 Timing

The problem of timing identified by PEPU clients will be difficult to resolve under the current funding arrangement. The 2010-11 PEPU wound up on 2 November 2010, and further funding is not available until 2013-14. That may or may not be shortly before an election – there is no way of telling today when the next election will be called. The problems reported by clients (see section 3.3.1 above) therefore may well be repeated.

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<sup>5</sup> Hansard, *ibid.* p 24.

There is a strong case for the funding of assistance in policy development of the kind provided by PEPU to be ongoing. This would enable non-government parties and independents' policies to be tested more thoroughly prior to an election campaign. The gains in terms of better policy debate would be considerable. As noted by the Parliamentary Librarian:

I think it was revealed that the need for that information is not once every three years; it is an ongoing need, which is why the opportunity to discuss the lessons learned from the evaluation in the parliamentary budget office context will be very important. So I think there were a good number of short inquiries, but they had to be short because of the time frame. So we could do better if we had more time and we could develop better relationships so that we could be building on fundamental research<sup>6</sup>.

The PEPU may be a one-off exercise in the event of establishment of a Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO). That proposal is subject to a forthcoming cross-party committee inquiry, and outside the terms of reference of this evaluation.

The lessons learned from the PEPU experience do however indicate that there is an unmet demand for non-government parties to have access, not only in the immediate pre-election period but ongoing, to independent costing, fiscal and economic advice to aid policy development. The conflict of interest problems identified by Senator Murray (see section 1.1 of this report) would make it difficult for such support to be provided from within the Federal bureaucracy. An independent source of advice is highly desirable.

In the event that resource constraints prevent establishment of an ongoing source of costing and modelling support, an earlier timetable for the provision of a PEPU service – 12 to 18 months prior to the last available date for calling of a Federal election – would be an improvement. This would require shifting the allocation of funding already shown in the forward estimates from 2013-14 to 2012-13.

### **4.3 Quality of reports**

The reports provided to parliamentarians through the PEPU met basic quality standards in terms of accuracy and presentation. Some of the reports would however have been difficult to understand for a reader without a good understanding of economics. Users were not always given a clear guide to the implications of the reports for policy, and the relevance of the numbers provided to policy options.

One of the strengths of the Parliamentary Library is its ability to present information in a way targeted to the policy needs of parliamentarians – a capability that has been built up over years of experience. The PEPU staff would have had the capacity to provide more interpretation and analysis had their timetable and resources permitted.

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<sup>6</sup> Hansard, *ibid.* p 24

A more useful policy product, if resources permitted, could for example: draw attention to key points in a report, including points that might otherwise be buried in complex tables; indicate the range of uncertainty in the report; provide comparative information indicating whether this particular policy issue was more or less fraught with uncertainty than others; refer readers to other reports on the public record that had canvassed similar policy issues.

There could also be a role for an ongoing service provider (whether PEPU or PBO) to initiate its own papers, for publication as an aid to debate on fiscal and economic policy questions. To the extent that these could draw on work already commissioned for the purposes of briefing parliamentarians, there would be only a small additional cost involved.

There could easily be instances in the future where a range of alternative policies on the same topic are put forward, each requiring modelling of different scenarios. In such cases, a summary of the different modelling exercises showing the range of potential policy options and the different effects of each would be a useful output that would help inform public debate.

Conversely, on occasion different models can produce divergent results for the same policy, because of differences in the way the models are constructed; again, in such cases the public interest would be served by publication of the two results side by side with an explanation of why they differ.

These potential outputs would depend on availability of resources, and on ensuring confidentiality can be preserved in relation to the parliamentarians commissioning the work. This leads us to the issue of how transparent and public any outputs should be.

#### **4.4 Publication of reports**

The protocol that reports would be made public in the event that they were mentioned in policy announcements carried inherent risks. It relied on the ability of PEPU staff to monitor announcements and identify references to reports. There could also have been risks for parliamentarians in the event that a reference was inadvertently made to a report in the course of an unrelated announcement, triggering publication of that report. It may have led to sub-optimal use of the reports in policy development.

On the other hand, the rationale for the protocol is obvious: where a policy is presented to the public in a way that indicates that it is supported by independent costing or modelling, there will be a strong public interest in seeing the report of that costing or modelling. It is a comparable rationale to that which currently applies to costings under the *Charter of Budget Honesty Act 1998*.

An alternative approach to increase transparency while reducing the risks of the current approach could be considered. Possible options include:

- all responses to requests to be kept confidential, and not released by the Unit (or any other body that might take its place). It could still be left to the

parliamentarians concerned to make the report public should they choose to do so;

- where multiple requests are received for modelling of options in the same subject area, the Unit (or replacement entity) could publish an aggregated summary of the results. It would be useful if this could be accompanied by a neutral commentary on the policy implications of the different possible options. This would only be feasible if any such commentary could be published without revealing the identity of the requesting party or parties<sup>7</sup>; and
- where an external consultant's report is received that is of high value and of broad community interest, it would be open to the Unit (or replacement entity) to seek permission from the requesting party to release the report.

This would be comparable to the approach currently taken with other Parliamentary Library responses to requests for briefing.

## **4.5 Role of the Library and of PEPU**

Following some initial uncertainty and confusion, a division of roles between the PEPU and the Library emerged. The appropriate roles were seen as:

Library: provision of background information, research and analysis, references, summaries and links, to assist in the initial stages of policy formulation

PEPU: provision of costing and modelling of policies, at their draft stages, to allow them to be tested and if necessary amended.

For the future, the distinction could be spelt out more clearly and explicitly.

In the interests of both independence of the service and minimising confusion for users, separation of any future PEPU service within the Library, at least organisationally if not physically, would be desirable. Strong communications between the two will still be needed. A balance needs to be struck between clearly separating roles between the providers, and minimising the risks of double-handling of requests or duplicating effort.

## **4.6 Procurement and contract management**

An open and transparent procurement process should be established to obtain costing, modelling, economic advice and related services from external providers.

The approach adopted in similar situations elsewhere in the Australian Government is for agencies to establish a panel of pre-qualified suppliers. In the case of the PEPU or

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<sup>7</sup> One stakeholder suggested the Unit could have provided this kind of public commentary, under existing Parliamentary Library arrangements, were it not for the time pressures experienced in 2010.

any equivalent service, this would be a useful mechanism. The steps to be taken might include:

- Public advertisement via Austender and in print media of the intention to establish a panel, and seeking quotations from interested providers.
- Request for quotation documentation to be available including an outline of services to be purchased, an indication of the possibly urgent timeframes involved in responding to requests, and the need for clarity in advice to assist in policy development. The quotation could also seek respondents' proposals for additional services they could provide to meet as yet unidentified needs
- Specification that quotations should include a statement of capabilities, referees, evidence of past performance and a schedule of prices; to assist in evaluating responses, potential providers could be asked to provide an indication of their pricing for one or two actual or hypothetical requests
- Selection and publication of a list of suppliers
- Negotiation of standing contracts with selected suppliers.

This is a high level summary of a possible process – the procurement itself would need to be managed either by the Library or, in the event a Parliamentary Budget Office or similar body is established, by that body.

The concern raised by some clients that the process for contract management was too arms-length should be addressed. It would not be desirable for clients to manage the consultancies directly – this would entail budgetary risks, and would limit the pool of potential providers (many would be nervous about taking on the political risk of appearing to be directly managed by a political party).

Nevertheless, in most contracting relationships for consulting services there is regular interaction between the client and provider through discussions, progress reports and feedback, to ensure that the consultant is kept on track and delivers a useful end product. This has advantages for both client and consultant in minimising wasted effort and improving any eventual report.

Possible ways in which this could be achieved by the PEPU or a body undertaking a similar function could include:

- Building a mid-point progress report into any contract for services (other than a very short term exercise such as a single run of a model);
- Establishing a protocol that a meeting can be arranged, under the auspices of the PEPU/other body, between the area making the request and the selected provider, based on a clear understanding that the purpose is to facilitate the exchange of information and clarify any points of confusion about the request.

## 4.7 Transparency in protocols and procedures

A concern expressed by many clients was that there was too little clarity in the processes adopted by PEPU; this concern was shared by PEPU staff, who also felt that they were developing their procedures “on the run” in light of the deadline posed by the forthcoming election. Some of the initial areas of confusion experienced by some clients were around the role of the unit and how its services differed from those of the Parliamentary Library itself; how requests for assistance would be handled; and to what extent parties’ nominations of preferred consultancy providers could be accommodated.

For any future arrangement, it would be highly desirable for protocols for the operation of a PEPU, Parliamentary Budget Office or any other equivalent to be put in place early and made available to all potential users. These protocols could include matters such as:

- how requests are made;
- who is entitled to make requests;
- what happens to a request once received;
- how results are disseminated;
- in what circumstances a report would or would not be published;
- how the interaction with consultants will be managed; and
- how any available budget is to be allocated.

## 5 Recommendations - summary

*Recommendation One:* In the event a parliamentary budget office (PBO) is established, its brief should include provision of the kinds of assistance offered by the PEPU in 2010, such as costing and economic modelling.

*Recommendation Two:* Reflecting the iterative, interactive nature of policy development, this assistance should be available to parliamentarians on an ongoing basis

*Recommendation Three:* In the event that parliamentarians had access to costing and economic modelling on an ongoing basis, the funding provided to PEPU would not be anywhere near sufficient to meet demand. Either significant additional funding would be required or a strict rationing mechanism based on a notional division of funding in proportion to parties' representation in the parliament would need to be introduced.

*Recommendation Four:* A clear outline of the division of roles and responsibilities between the PEPU/ PBO and the Parliamentary Library should be formulated and published. The underlying principle needs to be clarity in the separation of roles while still allowing coordination and exchanges of information.

*Recommendation Five:* A PEPU/PBO should have the capacity, subject to budget constraints, to publish reports on its own initiative on key economic and fiscal issues of general interest.

*Recommendation Six:* A list of consultants available to provide costing advice, economic modelling, fiscal policy advice and other related services should be selected through an open and competitive tender process.

*Recommendation Seven:* Protocols and procedures for the operation of the PEPU/PBO should be drafted, circulated for consultation, and published.

## 6 Attachment A – PEPU service principles

Service principles for Parliamentary Library Pre-Election Policy Unit approved by the Joint Standing Committee on the Parliamentary Library on 17 June 2010.

- (a) The service is focused on providing information, analysis and advice to non-Government clients in the pre-election period. The funding, which is allocated across the whole financial year, will be expended as far as possible before the election but some final papers and advice may be provided after the election.
- (b) A separate new unit will be established by the Library to coordinate individual requests, produce publications that fall within the scope of the service and commission external specialist advice.
- (c) Non-Government Senators and Members will be informed about the new service and asked for their views on how the resources might best be applied to meet their needs.
- (d) The service will take election policy enquiries from all non-Government Senators and Members, with requests from Government Senators and Members referred to other research staff.
- (e) The Library will seek to ensure that access to the service is shared as equitably as possible between non-Government Senators and Members.
- (f) The Library will commission external experts for perspectives on key policy issues of interest in order to produce background material for policy development. Selection of experts will be consistent with Library practice. They may also be called on to provide advice to be used in the preparation of responses to individual client requests by library staff.
- (g) The Library will discuss possible cooperation with the Departments of Finance and Treasury to access information about their economic models.
- (h) The Library notes that costings of election commitments will continue to be able to be requested from the Secretaries of the Treasury and Department of Finance under the Charter of Budget Honesty. The Library's service will therefore not provide costings of election commitments.
- (i) The unit will commence on 1 July 2010 with the secondment of at least one existing Library Senior Researcher and will cease operation some time after the election. The Parliamentary Librarian will provide a report to the Library Committee on its operation and outcomes.

## 7 Attachment B – Methodology

This data for this evaluation was derived from the following sources:

- Interviews with staff from the offices of the Liberal, National and Greens parties, and of one independent
- Interviews with staff of the Parliamentary Library and the staff of the PEPU
- Examination of documents held by the PEPU. These included: requests for costing and modelling, and the reports arising from those requests; papers relating to the establishment of the PEPU; spreadsheets summarising expenditure on consultancies and staffing, derived from the financial records held by the Department of Parliamentary Services; emails between clients and the PEPU and between consultants and the PEPU; contracts between the PEPU and providers.

The most important source of information was interviews with PEPU clients. Most of the client consultation was undertaken by direct face-to face interview with the staff member responsible for making the request to the PEPU; one interview was conducted by telephone.

In some cases, the primary originator of the request was unavailable due to leave or other commitments, and another nominated staff members who had also been involved in the interaction with the PEPU was interviewed instead. Some of the staff members concerned chose to have their responses aggregated and a consolidated response reflecting their collective views provided through an interview with their nominated representative.

Interviewees were told their comments would be kept confidential, and the source of comments not identified in the report. The notes of interviews have been kept confidential, and not shared with staff of the Library.

Staff members interviewed were also asked to rate five key dimensions of the quality of the service provided through PEPU - timeliness, accuracy, responsiveness, confidentiality and independence – on a five point Likert scale. They were asked the following:

1. How would you rate the timeliness of the advice provided to you through the PEPU on the following scale?

1	2	3	4	5
Very timely	Timely	Adequate	Not very timely	Not timely at all

2. How accurate was the advice provided to you through the PEPU?

1	2	3	4	5
Very accurate, totally error free	Accurate	Mostly accurate, some errors	Poor accuracy, several obvious errors and omissions	Inaccurate, wrong in most respects

3. How responsive was the PEPU to your needs? (understanding of your request, understanding of the underlying intent and purpose, ability to provide useful and policy relevant information)

<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
Very responsive	Fairly responsive	Acceptable	Not very responsive	Unresponsive

4. How confident were you that the PEPU would keep your request confidential?

<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
Very confident	Confident	Somewhat confident	Not very confident	Not confident at all

5. How would you rate the independence of the PEPU, especially in terms of being impartial and free from any bias or preconceptions? (a question reinterpreted in the words of one respondent as “did they have a barrow to push”)

<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
Highly independent	Independent	Adequate	Not very independent	Not independent at all

As part of the evaluation information was also sought from two of the three external consultants engaged by the PEPU. One supplier was interviewed; the interview was conducted with the two most senior staff involved with provision of services to PEPU. The other provided comments in writing due to the overseas absence of key staff who had been involved in provision in advice.

## 8 Attachment C - References

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