

**From:** Michael Potter  
**To:** [Parliamentary Budget Office \(PBO\)](#)  
**Subject:** Submission on "Consultation paper: Allowing minor parties to opt in to the PBO's post-election report of election commitments "  
**Date:** Sunday, 11 March 2018 3:52:23 PM

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In reference to the PBO Consultation paper: Allowing minor parties to opt in to the PBO's post-election report of election commitments, I make the following comments:

- In the following comments, 'small party' refers to an independent or a party that can elect into the post-election report.
- The proposal to allow small parties to opt in to the post-election report is worthwhile.
- The specific proposals for how this would operate appear reasonable. I have the following comments on the details:
  - It seems reasonable for the PBO not to be required to monitor the individual policies of small parties and accept the list provided by these parties at face value. However, there might be value in the PBO stating it will exercise judgement on this and will amend the list provided by a small party if accepting the list would significantly misrepresent the clear policies of that party.
  - The requirement that small parties provide a list of election commitments before polling day appears to be unnecessarily restrictive. Given the PBO will be fully occupied with the post-election report for major parties after polling day, this list could be provided after polling day with little or no detrimental effect on the operation of the PBO. This delay would also be necessary if the recommendation below is adopted to allow small parties to opt in to the report if they are newly elected to Parliament.
- There is one issue missing from the proposals: how to treat small parties that are in Parliament *after* the election but not before the election. It is recommended that the PBO should consider allowing any such party to elect to participate in the post-election report.
- The consultation paper relates to parties that are in Parliament before the election. Small parties that no longer have representation after an election are specifically excluded from eligibility for the post-election report.
- However, the converse situation can equally apply, in this situation consideration should be given to allowing small parties that are newly elected to Parliament to opt-in to the post-election report.
- This will allow all MPs in Parliament after an election to opt-in to the post-election report. If this approach is not followed, then the opportunity to opt-in will be unavailable to some MPs, specifically those small parties that were not in Parliament before the election.
- It is not clear that this exclusion is warranted.
- Small parties that are newly represented in Parliament will (generally) not have the opportunity to make use of PBO costings before the election. However, it is not clear that this is a valid reason to exclude them from the post-election report.
- If newly elected small parties are allowed to opt in to the post-election report, they will probably need to be given a deadline after the polling day for opting in to the report. Such a delay is unlikely to have a detrimental effect on the operation of the PBO – as noted above, the PBO will be fully occupied with the post-election report for major parties after polling day.

I am happy to discuss these comments further.

Michael Potter