



Correcting the record

The PBO monitors references to itself in the media to ensure we, and the information or advice we prepare are referenced correctly. On occasions where our work is referenced incorrectly, we assess the reference and take action as appropriate.

In deciding upon the appropriate action to take, the PBO will consider the damage a misrepresentation could have on the reputation of the PBO and also the potential impact any public statement we make may have on parliamentary processes.

In line with our legislation, the PBO does not comment on the contents of confidential requests or our responses. However, section 64V(4) of the Parliamentary Services Act allows the Parliamentary Budget Officer to make a public statement to clarify a matter relating to a confidential costing or analysis where the Officer is satisfied it is necessary in the public interest to make a statement.

Our preferred approach in most cases will be to liaise with parliamentarians or journalists to correct the record so that a misrepresentation is not further reported. However, if a significant misrepresentation of PBO analysis were to occur and was widely reported, and the parliamentarian did not correct the record to our satisfaction, the PBO would be obliged to issue a public correction.

Steps we may take to correct the record include:

- liaising with parliamentarians and their advisors to correct material they have prepared and prevent ongoing misrepresentations
- liaising with journalists where relevant to correct material they have produced and prevent further misrepresentations
- if necessary, releasing a media statement to publicly correct the record.

Matters that inform our assessment of whether we need to correct the record in relation to the reporting of our work, and the appropriate level of action that we would take, include:

- whether a publicly referenced costing or analysis is confidential
- the extent of any misrepresentation and whether it is material
- how widespread the reporting of a misrepresentation is
- whether (or not) the figures referred to accurately reflect our costing or analysis
- whether any conclusion attributed to the PBO accurately reflects our advice
- whether the role of the PBO is accurately described.

The most effective way to ensure our costing advice is not misrepresented is for parliamentarians to publicly release the costing advice we provided to them. Where a PBO costing is released publicly or the requesting parliamentarian advises it is no longer confidential and can be released, we will publish the costing on the PBO website at pbo.gov.au.