



Supplementary Budget Estimates, 31 October 2025 Opening Statement - Parliamentary Budget Officer

Good morning Chair, Deputy Chair and Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to make an opening statement and I look forward to working with all new and returning members of the 48th Parliament.

As this is our first appearance before this committee for the 48th Parliament, I wanted to briefly mention the work that the PBO does.

- We are most well-known for our costings work for parliamentarians. Most of this work is confidential, allowing parliamentarians to develop policy ideas and policy positions. Demand has continued to grow for these services.
- We also undertake budget analysis. This might be things like helping parliamentarians understand spending in a particular program, or testing different scenarios and their effects on the budget.
- We provide information services for parliamentarians and their advisers, including online sessions shortly after the budget and MYEFO are released. We explain how to navigate these documents and find key information.
- We support committees with costings and analysis – dental and Tasmanian freight equalisation being just two such examples.
- We publish information papers to inform understanding of the budget – our recently released Medium-Term Budget Outlook paper, which looked at pressures on the budget for the next decade is an example. Many of these reports continue to be of interest well after they are published, particularly our ‘explainers’, such as on fuel tax and on franking credits.
- We produce self-service digital tools used by members, advisers and commentators. These can be used to understand the effect of changes to budget assumptions or spending on the budget. (Defence to 3.5%; changes in the personal income tax rates).
- We also publish a post-election report of commitments made in each election.

In the last Parliament the PBO received and completed a record number of costings – with close to 2,700 completed – reflecting increased engagement and use of the PBO across the parliament. We are already at levels of demand well above this time in the previous parliament.

The unprecedented level of costing demand required us to draw on some of our cash reserves through a busy election year and implement a prioritisation framework so that we focus our efforts on what is most important to members.

PBO review

The JCPAA has initiated a review of the PBO, as it has the opportunity to do after each election, and has asked Dr Martin Parkinson to undertake this review. I think this is an excellent opportunity to check on the work of the PBO and whether this is meeting the needs of the parliament as well as to consider the scope and work of the PBO. I understand Dr Parkinson is speaking to a number of stakeholders in this process and is due to provide the report to the JCPAA by no later than 3 February 2026.

Temporary move out of Parliament House

This week, the PBO temporarily relocated out of Parliament House to West Block. The Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) requested that the PBO relocate outside of Parliament House in order to support refurbishment work planned by DPS across the building. We understand that while this is not permanent, DPS's preference is that this would be for a number of years – potentially up to 7 years.

The PBO has worked, along with DPS, to ensure PBO is able to continue the high level of service to the parliament, including through maintaining a presence in Parliament House given we regularly meet with parliamentarians and advisers. We will continue to maintain that office at Parliament House, which will be staffed during sitting weeks. Our expectation is that the PBO will move back into Parliament House as soon as practical.

Refresh of the PBO Expert Panel

As a very small agency with a wide range of policy topics, we engage with Commonwealth agencies as well as our Expert Panel who provide advice on matters related to policy costings and our fiscal policy analysis program. This year we have refreshed our Expert Panel, with several new members joining our first in-person meeting in a number of years the week before last. I would like to thank both past and current members of the Expert Panel for their assistance to the PBO.

Sam Reinhardt

Parliamentary Budget Officer

31 October 2025