



Powers of the Parliamentary Budget Office under the inquiry spotlight

Whether the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) should have access to statutory information and powers to gather that information will be considered next week at Parliament House.

The joint committee of public accounts and audit will hold its first hearing for the inquiry into the operations of the PBO on Thursday, 28 August.

Whether PBO should report on Government progress against a new set of fiscal rules (as recommended by the National Commission of Audit) and report against medium-term projections of fiscal outlook beyond the forward estimates will also be examined.

Mr Phil Bowen, Parliamentary Budget Officer, Mr Ian McPhee, Auditor General and Professor Miranda Stewart, Director of the Australian Tax and Transfer Police Institute will address the committee.

The Federal Parliamentary Budget Office was formed in 2012 and quickly established itself as a respected institution of the Parliament. Committee Chair Dr Andrew Southcott said the PBO provides an important service to MPs and Senators and has made a real contribution to public debate about election commitments and the budget.

"It is important to foster a 'pro-disclosure' culture across the public service and ensure the PBO has the mandate, powers and resources it needs to fulfil its objectives," Dr Southcott said.

The committee will also consider whether the Australian model reflects best practice as identified by the International Monetary Fund and whether any legislative changes are required.

The terms of reference and more information about the inquiry can be found on the Committee's website <http://www.aph.gov.au/jcpaa>.

For media comment: please contact Committee Chair, Dr Andrew Southcott MP, on 0402579674 (Matthew Hee).

For information about the inquiry and public hearing: please contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4615, email jcpaa@aph.gov.au, or visit the Committee website <http://www.aph.gov.au/jcpaa>.