

STANDING UP
FOR WHAT
MATTERS



17 August 2014

Jane Hearn
Secretary
Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit
Parliament House
By email: jcpaa@aph.gov.au

To the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

Inquiry into the Parliamentary Budget Office

The Australian Greens are proud to have played a role in driving the establishment of the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) which began operation in July 2012.

Creating a new institution to cost the policies of all parties and independent members, free from political control or interference is a reform that the 43rd Parliament shall be long remembered for.

The PBO is now a vital institution that has strengthened our democracy by bringing greater accountability and transparency to the policy costings process, particularly during elections.

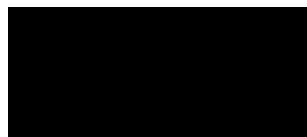
During elections it is crucially important that the financial impact of a candidate's policy is made available to the public directly on the Australian Parliament Website, or through the media. The establishment of the PBO has made this possible, ensuring that the Australian public can be better informed about the costs of election policy proposals before casting their vote on Election Day.

At the last election, the Australian Greens submitted all of its 56 policies for costing and automatic public release by the PBO during the caretaker period; a process which enabled us to demonstrate in detail how the Australian Greens are an economically responsible party with comprehensive policies for Australia's future.

The PBO was able to minimise (but not completely abolish) the political game-playing that has traditionally surrounded the costing of policies in the lead up to Election Day, which is a much-welcomed reform.

The PBO has improved transparency around election commitments, and facilitated more informed public debate about budgetary matters. The Australian Greens support any necessary changes that improve the PBO's ability to perform its important public functions and would strongly oppose any limiting of its existing responsibilities.

Yours Sincerely



Penny Allman-Payne
Co-convenor
Australian Greens