



Committee reviews Parliamentary Budget Office

The Parliamentary Budget Office will be reviewed in a new inquiry conducted by the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit.

The committee, which announced the new inquiry today, will report its findings to Parliament before the end of the year.

The Federal Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) was established in 2012 and is part of a global trend to bring independent analysis and information into the parliamentary and public debate.

Committee Chair Dr Andrew Southcott MP said the committee will examine whether the PBO is meeting the objectives for which it was established.

“The PBO was intended to increase the transparency of the budget process, provide analysis of fiscal policy, and cost policy initiatives, including election commitments,” Dr Southcott said.

“To carry out this important mandate, the PBO must have access to information, and command the respect and trust of parliamentarians and the public.”

The recent ANAO Report No. 36, examined *The Administration of the Parliamentary Budget Office*, and found that the PBO was performing well. The committee will review the ANAO report, and use its oversight powers under the Parliamentary Services Act to look more widely at whether the PBO should:

- have statutory information gathering powers, and access to information
- report on government progress against a new set of fiscal rules (as recommended by the National Commission on Audit), and
- report against medium term projections of fiscal outlook beyond the forward estimates.

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 committee invites submissions from the general public, corporate, academic or other NGO stakeholders and will take written submissions until 11 August,” Dr Southcott said.

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>.