



## **STATEMENT BY THE JOINT COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT ON THE 2018-19 DRAFT ESTIMATES FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICE AND THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE**

Each year the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit is required by legislation to consider the draft budget estimates of the Parliamentary Budget Office and the Australian National Audit Office, and make recommendations to both Houses of Parliament.

I rise today to fulfil this requirement and make a statement on whether the Committee considers that the proposed funding for these offices is sufficient to carry out their respective mandates.

With regard to the Parliamentary Budget Office, the Committee has been informed that the PBO is not seeking supplementation in the 2018-19 Budget.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer has advised the Committee that existing resources will be sufficient for the PBO's estimated expenses in 2018-19. The Committee notes that the PBO's special appropriation is expected to be fully drawn down by end 2020-21 and we will continue to consult with the PBO regarding future resourcing requirements.

The Committee also notes the recent independent review of the PBO, which made 16 recommendations. Under the direction of the new Parliamentary Budget Officer, work is continuing to implement these recommendations, including:

- establishing a panel of expert advisers to consult on policy costings and fiscal policy issues,
- issuing an information paper outlining the PBO's costing processes, timeframes and prioritization framework, and a consultation paper outlining how minor parties could be included in post-election reports, and
- publication of information papers explaining the methodological issues associated with various policy costings.

The Committee endorses the proposed 2018-19 budget for the PBO and commends the PBO for its contributions to the Parliament and the public through high quality fiscal analysis and research.

With regard to the Australian National Audit Office, the Committee has been informed that the ANAO is not seeking supplementation in the 2018-19 Budget.

The Auditor-General has advised the Committee that the ANAO's estimated expenses can be met within existing resources, and that he anticipates completing approximately 48 performance audits over the period.

The ANAO has flagged its continuing focus on audits of Commonwealth entity Annual Performance Statements. The Committee looks forward to reviewing the ANAO's work in this space, with a view to improving the quality of performance information provided under the *Public Governance Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

The Committee endorses the proposed budget for the ANAO in 2018-19 and thanks the ANAO for its work in supporting public accountability and transparency, including through audits under the Commonwealth performance framework.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Committee will continue to closely monitor the work programs and draft budget estimates of the PBO and ANAO. As independent authorities, the PBO and ANAO need to be sufficiently funded to fulfil their legislative requirements and adequately support the Parliament.

The Committee thanks the Parliamentary Budget Officer and the Auditor-General for their work in support of the Parliament, and their efforts to maintain a strong working relationship with the Committee. They have made themselves available for regular briefings and provided invaluable advice to the Committee on a variety of matters. The Committee looks forward to continuing these productive relationships.

Senator Dean Smith  
Chair  
8 May 2018