

Senate Finance & Public Administration Committee:
Answers to written Questions on Notice Supplementary Budget Estimates 2013-14
Parliamentary Departments Portfolio
November 2013

Department: Parliamentary Budget Office

Topic: Commission of Audit

Senator: Senator Wong

Question reference number: 61

Type of question: Written

Question

Mr Bowen: Okay. I have received a letter from the chair of the commission asking me if I would put in a submission. I propose to give the commission a submission, which in essence will give background to the establishment and mandate of the PBO in Australia and outline the developments internationally that have been occurring, particularly in recent years, where the number of these independent fiscal institutions has grown quite dramatically, particularly since 2005 and quite a large number since the GFC.

Senator WONG: And is the only communication to date the letter from the chair of the commission?

Mr Bowen: I had a phone call—

Senator WONG: From?

Mr Bowen: From one of the secretariat, telling me the letter would be coming.

Senator WONG: And are you able to provide us with a copy of the letter? You could take that on notice.

Mr Bowen: I can take it on notice, but I think it is a letter that has been given to many people; it is not specific to me.

Senator WONG: It is not a specific PBO letter?

Mr Bowen: No, it is not. It is addressed to me, but it is not specific.

Answer

Letter from the Chair of National Commission of Audit to the Parliamentary Budget Officer is provided in attachment A.



Australian Government
National Commission of Audit



Mr Phil Bowen PSM
Parliamentary Budget Officer
Parliamentary Budget Office
Via email: phil.bowen@pbo.gov.au

[Handwritten signature]
6/11/13

Dear Mr Bowen

NATIONAL COMMISSION OF AUDIT

I am writing to invite a submission from your organisation to the work of the National Commission of Audit (the Commission) announced on 22 October 2013 by the Treasurer, the Hon Joe Hockey MP, and the Minister for Finance, Senator the Hon Mathias Cormann.

The Commission has been established to conduct a review of the scope, efficiency and functions of the Commonwealth Government. I have been appointed Chair of the Commission. The Terms of Reference are available at www.ncoa.gov.au.

The Commission is seeking input from a wide range of sources to allow it to deliver its Phase 1 and Phase 2 reports to the Commonwealth Government on 31 January 2014 and 31 March 2014, respectively.

Among other things, the Commission has been asked to assess the current split of roles and responsibilities between and within the Commonwealth Government and state and territory governments, including identifying areas of duplication, and consider how to improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness with which government services and policy advice are delivered. Further, the Commission is asked to identify whether there remains a compelling case for activities to continue to be undertaken and, if so, whether they could be undertaken more efficiently by the private sector, not-for-profit sector, the states or local government. This includes opportunities for outsourcing and privatisation.

I would welcome a formal written submission from your organisation, covering these points, as well as any observations on the public sector more generally. Submissions should be a maximum 15 pages in length, but may contain attachments providing more detailed information. Submissions need to be submitted, as a minimum in electronic form, to the Commission by 22 November 2013 via secretariat@ncoa.gov.au.

The head of the secretariat to the Commission, Mr Peter Crone, can be contacted on (02) 6215 3100 or at the above email address.

I look forward to your contribution.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A.F. Shepherd', written in a cursive style.

A.F. (Tony) Shepherd AO
Chair