

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee:
Answers to written Questions on Notice
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2014–15
Parliamentary Departments Portfolio
October 2014**

Department Parliamentary Budget Office

Topic Reviews

Senator Senator Ludwig

Question reference number 102

Type of question Written

Question

Since Budget Estimates in June 2014:

- 1 How many new reviews (defined as review, inter-departmental group, inquiry, internal review or similar activity) have been commenced? Please list them including:
 - a The date they were ordered.
 - b The date they commenced.
 - c The Minister responsible.
 - d The department responsible.
 - e The nature of the review.
 - f Their terms of reference.
 - g The scope of the review.
 - h Who is conducting the review?
 - i The number of officers, and their classification level, involved in conducting the review.
 - j The expected report date.
 - k The budgeted, projected or expected costs, and
 - l If the report will be tabled in parliament or made public.

- 2 For any review commenced or ordered since Budget Estimates in June, 2014, have any external people, companies or contractors being engaged to assist or conduct the review?
 - a If so, please list them, including their name and/or trading name/s and any known alias or other trading names.
 - b If so, please list their managing director and the board of directors or equivalent.
 - c If yes, for each is the cost associated with their involvement, including a break down for each cost item.
 - d If yes, for each, what is the nature of their involvement.
 - e If yes, for each, are they on the lobbyist register, provide details.
 - f If yes, for each, what contact has the Minister or their office had with them.

- g If yes, for each, who selected them.
 - h If yes, for each, did the minister or their office have any involvement in selecting them.
 - (i) If yes, please detail what involvement it was.
 - (ii) If yes, did they see or provided input to a short list.
 - (iii) If yes, on what dates did this involvement occur.
 - (iv) If yes, did this involve any verbal discussions with the department, and
 - (v) If yes, on what dates did this involvement occur.
- 3 Which reviews are on-going?
 - a Please list them.
 - b What is the current cost to date expended on the reviews?
 - 4 Have any reviews been stopped, paused or ceased? Please list them.
 - 5 Which reviews have concluded? Please list them.
 - 6 How many reviews have been provided to Government? Please list them and the date they were provided.
 - 7 When will the Government be responding to the respective reviews that have been completed?
 - 8 What reviews are planned?
 - a When will each planned review be commenced?
 - b When will each of these reviews be concluded?
 - c When will government respond to each review?
 - d Will the government release each review?
 - e If so, when? If not, why not?

Answer

- 1 On 17 July 2014, the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit (JCPAA) commenced an inquiry into and report on the operations of the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) with specific regard to :
 - a PBO statutory information gathering powers and access to information, including the Contingency Reserve
 - b PBO reporting of Government progress against a new set of fiscal rules, as recommended by the National Commission of Audit
 - c PBO reporting against medium-term projections of fiscal outlook beyond the forward estimates
 - d Best practice for independent fiscal institutions as identified by the International Monetary Fund
 - e PBO implementation of the recommendation from Australian National Audit Office Report No. 36 (2013-14), and
 - f The need for any legislative change.
- 2 Not applicable.

- 3 Nil.
- 4 Nil.
- 5 Nil.
- 6 The Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) tabled the performance audit of the Administration of the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) on 5 June 2014 and the JCPAA tabled the Review of the operations of the PBO on 1 December 2014. Both reviews were at no cost to the PBO.
- 7 The JCPAA made eight recommendations to Government in its review. The response and timeframe is a matter for consideration by the Government.
- 8 Nil.