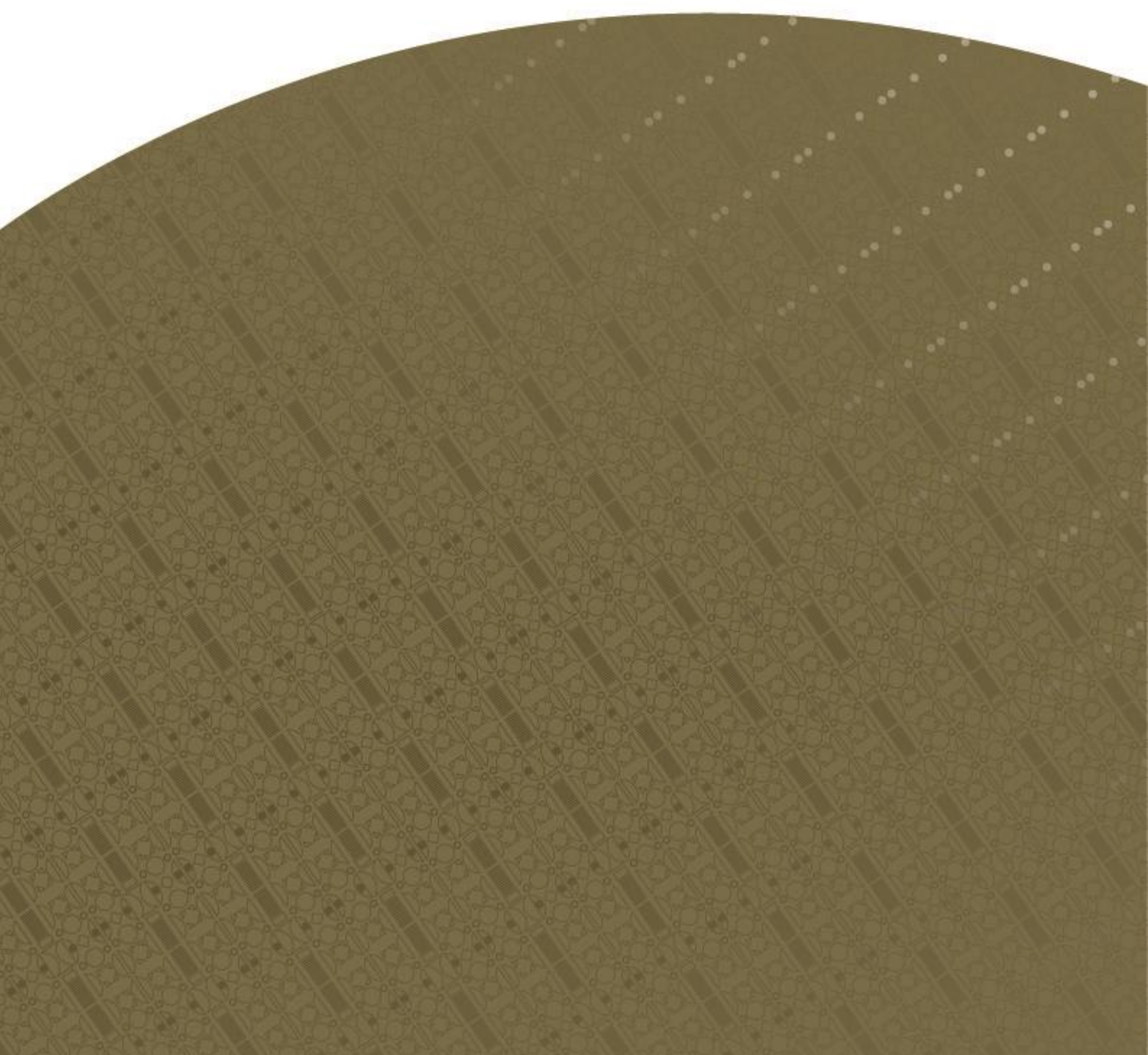




Parliamentary
Budget Office

Parliamentary Budget Office

CORPORATE PLAN 2023-24



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Contents

Foreword	iii
Purpose	1
Core functions	2
Parliamentarian requests – policy costings and budget analysis	3
Self-initiated products	3
Election commitments report	3
People and systems	3
External engagement	4
Key activities	4
Parliamentarian requests – policy costings and budget analysis	5
Self-initiated products	5
Election commitments report	6
People and systems	7
External engagement	7
Operating environment	8
Supporting the Commonwealth Parliament	8
The impact of external reviews	8
Preparing for the future	9
Capabilities	9
People and culture	9
Data and models	10
Information and communication technology (ICT) capability	10
Cooperation and external engagement	11
Oversight	12
Service providers and partners	12
Panel of expert advisers	12
Risk oversight and management	13
Performance	15
Appendix A	27

Foreword



As the accountable authority of the PBO, I present the PBO Corporate plan 2023-24, as required under paragraph 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

This plan has been prepared in accordance with section 16E of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014*.

This plan also serves as the PBO's work plan for 2023-24, as required by section 64Q of the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999*.

Much of the work of the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) is shaped by the parliamentary cycle. Each election and new parliament present us with challenges, but also with opportunities.

While our work was dominated by election preparations for much of 2021 and 2022, since the May 2022 election we have invested in our systems and practices to further improve our service to parliamentarians.

New internal systems are now complemented by a more flexible and adaptable website, and we will soon provide parliamentarians with the option to interact with us through a secure portal that will improve information flows and access to their requests.

We recognise that our users have very different needs. Some have extensive experience in government finance. Others are looking for a way through the complexity of estimates and numbers to find the particular topic they are interested in.

It is important for the PBO to be able to meet needs all along the spectrum of interests. We will continue our attempts to make the complex more accessible. As part of that approach, we have significantly enhanced our approach to supporting users through our *Build your own budget* tool, which enables users to explore their own budget assumptions and policy settings, complemented by our own analysis through publications such as *Beyond the Budget* or shorter pieces such as Budget Explainers.

In the coming year, 2023-24, we will build on the external engagement we began at the start of the 47th Parliament and seek to ensure that parliamentarians benefit from the investments we have made.

Underlying this focus, we will also plan for the next election to ensure that we can deliver the focused and robust information we are entrusted to provide each term.

Our 2023-24 Corporate plan sets out how we will direct our efforts to enrich Australia's democracy by providing the Parliament and general public with crucial information and tools for making sound policy choices and facilitating public policy debates.

The Corporate plan is our primary planning document that outlines the PBO's purpose and core functions, the external and internal environment we operate in, our approach to risk management, our key activities, and measures of performance.

Stein Helgeby

Parliamentary Budget Officer
10 August 2023

Purpose

The Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) was established in 2012 in response to a growing international trend to examine the adequacy of fiscal management, government forecasting, and transparency of public expenditure, and to provide for greater independence, transparency and accountability in the costing of election commitments.

Our purpose is to inform the Parliament by providing independent and non-partisan analysis of the budget cycle, fiscal policy, and the financial implications of proposals. Our vision of enriching Australia’s democracy through independent budget and fiscal analysis drives everything we do. It is facilitated through delivery of our strategic priorities of service excellence, operational effectiveness, provision of independent and informative analysis, and investment in our people.



We improve the quality of the public policy debate by providing all parliamentarians with access to confidential costing and budget analysis services. We also publish papers and interactive tools to improve public understanding of fiscal policy and budget policy issues and enhance transparency around the financial implications of election commitments.

We are one of 4 parliamentary departments supporting the Australian Parliament.

<p>DEPARTMENT OF THE SENATE</p> <p>The Department of the Senate provides the Senate, its committees, the President of the Senate and Senators with a broad range of advisory and support services related to the exercise of the legislative power of the Commonwealth.</p>	<p>DEPARTMENT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES</p> <p>The Department of the House of Representatives provides services to support the efficient conduct of the House of Representatives, its committees, and certain joint committees, as well as a range of services and facilities for Members in Parliament House.</p>
<p>DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES</p> <p>The Department of Parliamentary Services provides a wide range of diverse services and facilities, such as the Parliamentary Library, to ensure the Parliament functions effectively.</p>	<p>PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICE</p> <p>The Parliamentary Budget Office provides independent and non-partisan analysis of the budget cycle, fiscal policy, and the financial implications of proposals.</p>

Core functions

Our mandate is to support the parliament by providing access to independent policy costings and additional support to scrutinise the Budget, and to help inform the public debate on budgetary and fiscal policy issues. We do this through our core functions:



Parliamentarian requests – policy costings and budget analysis

We provide all parliamentarians with access to advice on the financial implications of their policy proposals, based on the specifications they provide. Outside of the caretaker period for a general election, parliamentarians may submit requests for policy costings on a confidential basis. This means we are required to keep both the request and our response in confidence.

During the caretaker period for a general election, there is a different process for costings. Parliamentary parties and independent parliamentarians can request costings of their publicly announced election policies. We publish these requests, complete the analysis, and publicly release the costing as soon as possible.

We also provide parliamentarians with access to information relating to the Budget. They can request this information on a confidential basis, regardless of when the request is made.

Our policy costing and budget analysis services are available to parliamentary committees on issues that fall within our mandate. Responses to committee requests are automatically published.

Self-initiated products

We publish self-initiated reports, chart packs and interactive tools on the budget and fiscal policy settings. Through our publications and tools, we seek to improve budget transparency and promote better public understanding of fiscal and budget policy issues.

Election commitments report

After each general election, we publish a report that shows the budget impacts of the election commitments of each of the major parliamentary parties. This report presents the impacts on a policy-by-policy basis, as well as the aggregate impact of each party's policy platform. Minor parties and independents may choose to opt in to have their election commitments included in this report.

The purpose of this report is to provide transparency around the fiscal impact of election commitments. It serves an important role in encouraging parliamentary parties to announce fully costed election commitments and to publish their policy platforms prior to polling day.

People and systems

Our people and systems function develops and implements our organisational strategies and policies. This includes managing the delivery of a broad range of corporate services including human resources, financial management and reporting, governance and compliance, performance reporting, risk management, information management and communications.

We aspire to a strategic approach to managing our data and models that seeks to enhance corporate memory, mitigate key risks and facilitate our ambitions for performance and accuracy.

We strive to provide a working environment which recognises that people are key to our success and supports them to perform at their best, including by providing clear development and career pathways.

External engagement

We support our vision of enriching Australia’s democracy through independent budget and fiscal analysis by proactively engaging with our stakeholders and seeking to continually improve our services and their accessibility. We conduct a major stakeholder survey once every parliamentary term and have established new avenues to gather regular feedback. Better understanding the needs of parliamentarians and working to make complex information easier to consume supports our role in improving public understanding of the budget and fiscal policy issues.

Key activities¹

Our key activities in 2023-24 and beyond across our core functions are:

Inform the parliament by providing independent and non-partisan analysis of the budget cycle, fiscal policy, and the financial implications of proposals.				
POLICY COSTINGS & BUDGET ANALYSIS	SELF-INITIATED PRODUCTS	ELECTION COMMITMENTS REPORT	PEOPLE & SYSTEMS	EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT
<p>Prepare high quality policy costings and budget analyses at the request of parliamentarians in a timely manner.</p> <p>Develop and maintain our costing and projection models and databases.</p>	<p>Publish analysis and interactive tools that promote a better understanding of the budget and fiscal policy settings, with a particular focus on sustainability of the budget over the medium term.</p> <p>Develop analysis and tools to complement our publications.</p>	<p>Plan and prepare for the next general election to enable the completion of high-quality policy costings and a timely report analysing the budget impact of election commitments.</p>	<p>Introduce enhanced user-focused digital services.</p> <p>Invest in our people to drive effectiveness, efficiency and continuous improvement.</p> <p>Plan for election surge and mature our internal capabilities.</p> <p>Promote a diverse and inclusive work culture.</p>	<p>Triennial stakeholder survey: 47th Parliament and key stakeholders.</p> <p><i>Budget Insights</i> education program.</p> <p>Enhance collaboration with parliamentary departments.</p> <p>Build and maintain strong working relationships with parliamentarians and agencies.</p>

¹ Key activities serve as the priorities for the PBO’s work plan, as required by sub-section 64Q(3)(a) of the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999*.

Together, these activities support us to achieve our purpose to inform the parliament by providing independent and non-partisan analysis of the budget cycle, fiscal policy, and the financial implications of proposals. Our aim is to provide analysis and insights that add value and are tailored to the needs of our clients. Refer to **Appendix A** for a one-page summary of our planned activities by function.

Parliamentarian requests – policy costings and budget analysis

In 2023-24, we will continue to support parliamentarians through the provision of policy costings and budget analyses. This will be achieved by:

- working closely with parliamentarians and parliamentary committees to provide high-quality and timely responses to policy costings and budget analysis requests
- providing greater transparency by regularly reporting on the demand for our services, and timeliness of our responses
- continuing to mature our business processes to improve service efficiency and reporting
- investigating opportunities to streamline the information request process, including through proactively liaising with Commonwealth agencies to facilitate the timely provision of information that underpins our responses
- enhancing our datasets and models in anticipation of future demands, including through model simplification and developing tools to automate manual processes
- maturing quality assurance processes to underpin consistent, coherent and accurate responses to parliamentarian requests to a level that can withstand external scrutiny.

Self-initiated products

To enhance public understanding of the budget and fiscal policy settings, we will continue to deliver a self-initiated suite of short, issues focused papers and interactive tools. We aim to support readers and users to understand key concepts and be empowered to engage with the policy conversation.

Our 2023-24 self-initiated program has 4 parts:

- Economic and fiscal update related – reports and chart snapshots linked to government economic and fiscal updates, including our flagship medium- and longer-term fiscal sustainability analysis, *Beyond the budget*, highlighting fiscal risks and sustainability issues.
- Issues based shorter publications, including our Budget Explainer and Budget Bite series that seek to improve understanding of budget concepts and highlight key fiscal risks or distributional insights.
- Data and model publications that improve the transparency of budget estimates and the models that we use, including expansion of our historical fiscal dataset and enhanced data visualisation products that leverage the functionality of our new website.
- Interactive tools, including the maintenance and update of our *Build your own budget* tool, that provides unique user-driven insights into how changes in key economic and policy assumptions flow through to the medium-term fiscal position.

We retain flexibility within our self-initiated program to adjust our publications over the course of the year, including in response to emerging issues or interests of parliamentary committees. However, in the main our work considers issues related to:

- Fiscal sustainability
- Medium- and long-term fiscal risks
- Improving understanding of the budget
- Distributional analysis.

BUILD YOUR OWN BUDGET (BYOB)	An interactive tool to explore the impact of different economic assumptions and policy settings of your choice.
BEYOND THE BUDGET	A report on the medium-term (budget year plus 10 years) budget outlook, including projections of balance sheet, receipts and payments, and analysis of the major trends in, and risk to, the medium-term outlook and long-term fiscal sustainability.
HISTORICAL FISCAL DATA	Historical fiscal data published in the Government’s latest Budget update. The data includes time-series previously unavailable in a single location.
BUDGET SNAPSHOT & MYEFO SNAPSHOT	Succinct online graphical summaries of the Budget and MYEFO, published directly after each release. The snapshots provide a graphic summary and highlight the impacts of policy decisions and parameter changes.
BUDGET EXPLAINERS	Non-technical pieces focused on explaining a particular area of the budget.
BUDGET BITES	Short insights into fiscal policy issues and updates to previously published PBO analysis.
NATIONAL FISCAL OUTLOOK	A summary of the national fiscal outlook, published following the release of all the Commonwealth and state and territory budgets, providing a national perspective on fiscal outcomes across all levels of government.

Election commitments report

After each general election, we must publish a report on the budget impacts of the election commitments of each parliamentary party with five or more members in the parliament immediately before the commencement of the caretaker period. Minor parties and independents may choose to opt in to have their election commitments included in this report. This is a periodic report published every 3 years.

In 2023-24, we will start to prepare for the next general election. In the normal course of events, this would be expected after August 2024. Key activity will include:

- developing a plan that takes into account the outcomes of the after-action review of the 2022 Election commitments report
- preparing and publishing guidance materials for parliamentary parties on the approach to the report, including how election commitments with financial implications will be managed
- investing in our critical tools and processes.

People and systems

This function covers the enabling functions and capability that support the PBO to deliver on its mandate effectively and efficiently. In particular, supporting our people to build their technical and operational skills and experience.

In 2023-24 and beyond, our people and systems projects will focus on:

- investment in the diversity of our people as OnePBO, to enhance team effectiveness and efficiency, and support everyone to expand their skills, experience, and capabilities, including launching a refreshed diversity and inclusion strategy
- maturing business processes and modernising our technology suite to enable implementation of more user focused digital tools, including a new parliamentarian requests digital portal, refreshed information and knowledge management systems, and implementation of our data and model strategy
- developing a strategic workforce plan to ensure we are building the capability we need to support the election surge and beyond
- effectively managing strategic and operational risks to ensure the PBO is governed in a manner that adheres to our core commitments of independence, excellence and integrity.

External engagement

A key focus for us in supporting the 47th Parliament has been to lift our focus on external engagement. We will continue to mature our external engagement activity, building on the foundations established in the past year to build relationships with parliamentarians and agencies, as well as expanding our education programs. We are committed to continual improvement in our service delivery and to making our work accessible to our audience.

Our 2023-24, external engagement priorities include:

- undertaking the triennial stakeholder survey with the 47th Parliament and key stakeholders
- continuing the *Budget Insights* education program
- partnering with other parliamentary departments to deliver information products and link in with staff networks
- building and maintaining strong relationships with our stakeholder agencies to ensure continued provision of high-quality information and models that underpin our work
- proactive engagement with parliamentarians and their staff to deliver an improved requestor experience and effective request management

- refreshing our guidance material and information for requestors to support improved expectation management and client service, including information related to the preparation of the next election commitments report.

Operating environment

We operate within the broad governance and accountability arrangements that apply across the parliamentary and public sectors. Our operating environment is affected by various factors over which we have varying levels of influence. Understanding our operating environment allows us to identify potential challenges and opportunities that may impact our ability to fulfil our purpose. To inform our planning, we have identified 3 key areas that may present challenges and opportunities for us in 2023-24 and beyond:

1. Supporting the Commonwealth Parliament
2. The impact of external reviews
3. Preparing for the future.

Supporting the Commonwealth Parliament

During each parliamentary term we conduct a stakeholder survey to gather valuable feedback on our services. Feedback from the previous survey led us to enhance our induction of new parliamentarians and their staff, to develop the *Budget Insights* education program, build a new, user-focused website and progress a digital portal for the submission, receipt and management of request from parliamentarians. The survey of the 47th Parliament presents us with an opportunity to test and refine our service offerings and how we engage with our key stakeholders to better suit their needs.

We have expanded our mechanisms for receiving feedback from our key clients so that we can continue to meaningfully support the parliament and are embedding these into everyday activities.

The impact of external reviews

External reviews can present us with both challenges and opportunities. They may test or benchmark our internal systems, identify improvements to our services or operations, and provide clear recommendations linked to best practice. We have identified two groups of external reviews that may influence our operating environment:

- **Independent Review into Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces (Jenkins review) and Review of the Parliamentary Workplace: Responding to Serious Incidents (Foster review):** The final reports for the Jenkins review and Foster review were released in the second half of 2021. We continue to work with other parliamentary and relevant Commonwealth departments to implement the recommendations of both reports.
- **Review into our operations (PBO review):** Section 64T of the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999* allows for the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit (JCPAA) to conduct an independent review of our operations after each general election. Following the 2022 election the JCPAA formed the view that a further review of our operations was not needed at this time. Earlier reviews had been conducted following the 2013, 2016 and 2019 elections.

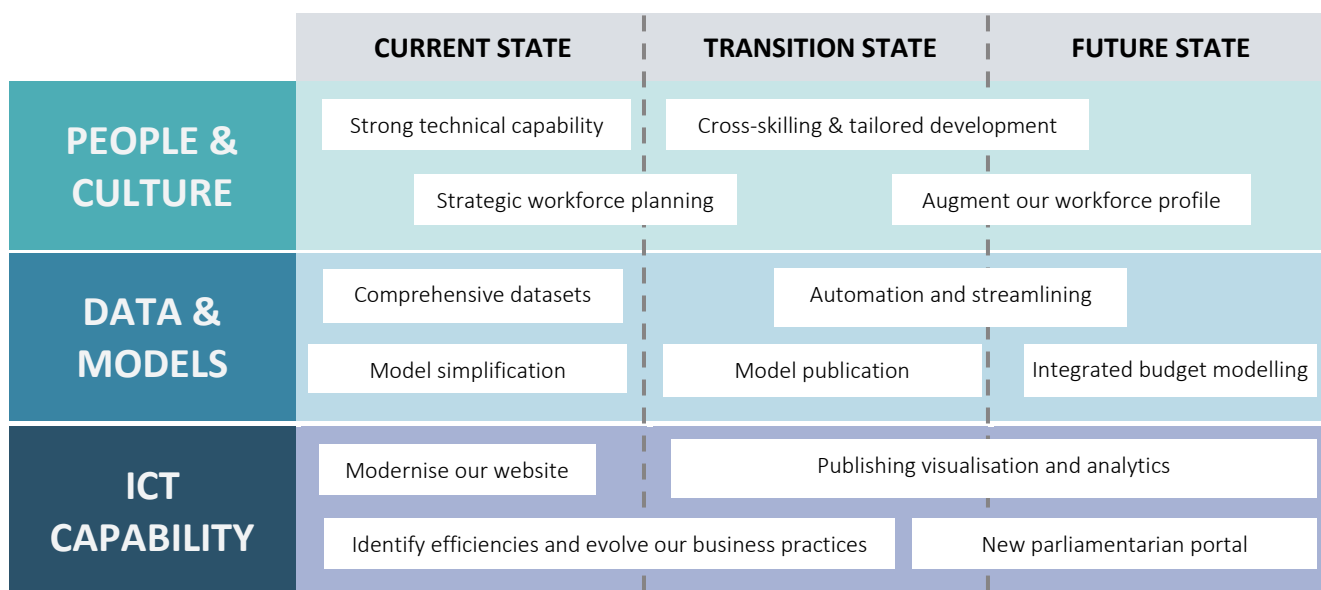
Preparing for the future

To achieve our vision of enriching Australia’s democracy through independent budget and fiscal analysis, we need to innovate, evolve, and remain responsive to changes in our operating environment. This includes adapting our internal processes to respond to environmental changes, modern workforce expectations, and ensuring our costings and self-initiated products consider changes in fiscal risks.

To ensure we remain a trusted partner, we will continually review our processes to identify improvements, look for new ways to deliver our information and services, and leverage technology to enhance user experience. This includes proactive investment in our people to be an employer of choice and retain our corporate knowledge.

Capabilities

In 2023-24 and beyond, we will focus on maturing our business operations and building and mitigating strategic risks. Capability initiatives are split into 3 key areas – people and culture, data and models, and ICT capability.



People and culture²

We have a small, dedicated workforce of around 45 employees, which becomes temporarily larger during an election year. Our workforce includes ongoing employees, secondees from other Commonwealth agencies and external organisations, and graduates under the Parliament of Australia Graduate Program.

² *People and culture* serve as the *allocation of resources* for the PBO’s work plan, as required by sub-section 64Q(3)(b) of the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999*.

We have adopted a flexible operating model, called OnePBO, to maximise efficiency and to enable us to meet the demand for our services whilst building breadth and depth in our team. In a general election year, we receive additional funding to surge our workforce to support the preparation and publication of the election commitments report.

Our analysts are allocated to the preparation of costings and budget analysis and to self-initiated longer term projects and publications. A small team of employees is dedicated to managing our governance and corporate support functions, including oversight of our outsourced payroll, financial transactions, and ICT services. Our technical and corporate staff collaborate to deliver on our key priorities.

In 2023-24 and beyond, we will continue to:

- invest in our workforce to attract and retain the right mix of expertise and capabilities to deliver on our strategic priorities (including cross-skilling initiatives, tailored development strategies, and succession planning)
- engage with staff as we refine our operating model and effectively mitigate risks
- augment our workforce with reciprocal secondment arrangements with other Commonwealth agencies
- review and update our approach to diversity and inclusion, including participation in cross department and agency networks
- support reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through our work in implementing the Reconciliation Action Plan, including participation in the Jawun program
- contribute to international capability building and partnership initiatives in our region.

Data and models

We develop and maintain a wide range of datasets and over 70 different models to deliver high quality and trusted costings and budget analysis. To ensure these are properly maintained we invest PBO resources and rely on strong, productive relationships with other Commonwealth agencies for access to data and models. We have well established arrangements in place to facilitate the provision of information. This includes standing information requests with several agencies to provide specified data and models after each economic and fiscal update.

To improve our responsiveness to parliamentary requests and reduce administrative burden for Commonwealth agencies, we are proactively looking for opportunities to improve the timeliness of accessing information through regular standing information requests, capability building, automation and streamlining complex modelling.

Consistent with the Data and Model Strategy 2023-2025, in 2023-24, we will look to further expand the amount of budget information and analysis publicly available including through the publication of models and interactive tools, such as an enhanced *Build your own budget* tool as well as dynamic visualisations within the new website.

Information and communication technology (ICT) capability

Effective and efficient ICT capability is critical to supporting our aspirations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of PBO operations, and the timeliness and accessibility of our services.

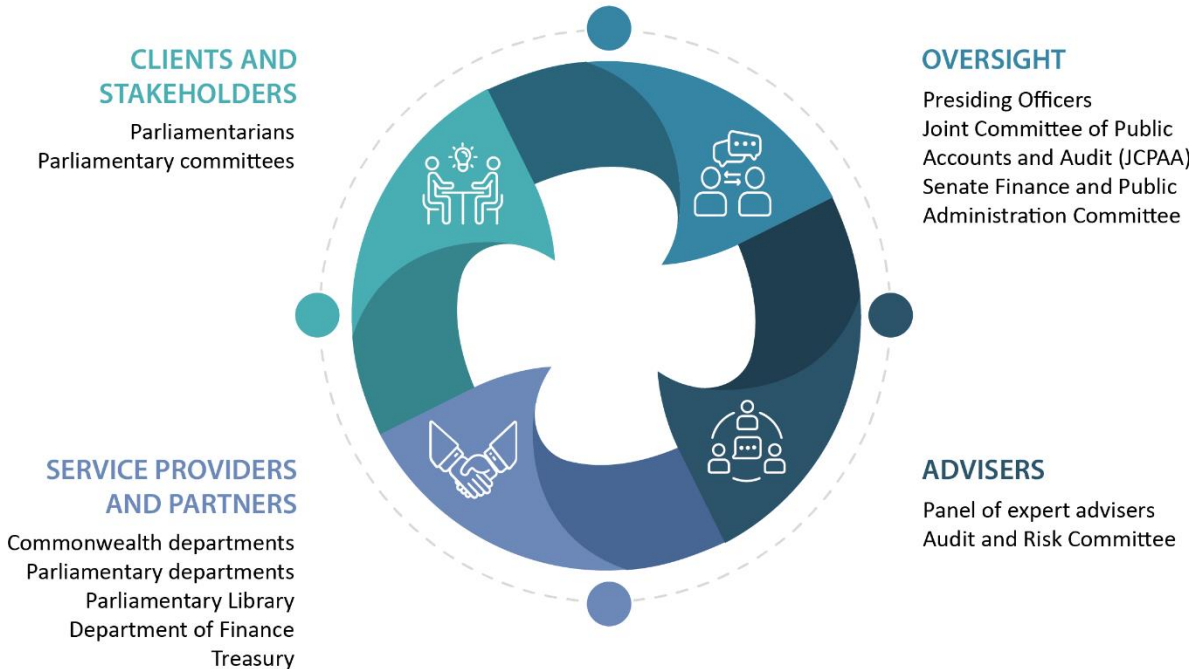
Our updated ICT environment has enabled us to effectively implement flexible and sustainable working practices, improve the efficiency of our internal workflows and data management, as well as supported business continuity. We have invested in improving the accessibility of our public facing work through our completed website modernisation project. Our new website has a fresh clean design, enhanced search and results filtering capability and provides a great opportunity for using interactive tools and data display such as PowerBI.

To support our continued ICT transformation, in 2023-24, we will update our ICT vision and governance artefacts. This update will include a clear objective to support citizen-development. We will leverage the architecture and environment of our out-sourced ICT services provider, the Department of Parliamentary Services, including cloud-based software as a service and Microsoft applications, to support innovation and automation of processes, where possible.

Key deliverables in 2023-24 include a parliamentarian portal and improving the interactivity and scope of our digital products.

Cooperation and external engagement

We engage with a wide range of Commonwealth agencies, organisations, and individuals as part of our ongoing operations. These cooperative relationships are crucial to us achieving our purpose through enhanced capabilities, improvements to the quality of our products, and increasing the relevance of our self-initiated work program.



Oversight

We are accountable to the parliament for our activities through the JCPAA and Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee. The JCPAA has an important oversight role for the PBO. We engage with them regularly throughout the year, including on our work plan, resourcing, and performance.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer reports to the Presiding Officers (the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate) in relation to the management of the PBO, our operations and work plan. The Parliamentary Budget Officer is not subject to direction in the performance of their functions.

Service providers and partners

Our ability to fulfil our purpose relies heavily on our relationships with a broad range of partners, including the Parliamentary Library, parliamentary departments, Commonwealth agencies, and independent research bodies.

Commonwealth agencies provide us with access to information and models that allow us to perform our core functions. We liaise regularly with Commonwealth agencies to maintain our strong relationships, and where appropriate, share our models and analysis to enhance capability across the public service.

Panel of expert advisers

Our panel of expert advisers was established in December 2017 to ensure our work is of the highest analytical quality. We meet annually with the panel and engage as required to provide advice on a broad range of matters related to policy costings and our self-initiated publication program.

Risk oversight and management

Risk management is a fundamental responsibility of all our employees. Risk oversight and management is about understanding our key threats and opportunities, including factors both within and outside our control. This allows us to implement mitigation strategies to influence our operating environment to allow us to achieve our objectives.

Our risk management framework consists of a collection of policies, processes and plans that are embedded into our business-as-usual practices at all levels. The framework meets our obligations as set out in the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* and the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy. The Parliamentary Budget Officer considers the advice of the Executive and Audit and Risk Committee in setting the PBO's appetite and tolerance for risk.

Individual risk management plans are developed to operationalise our risk policy and strategy. This includes plans for strategic risks, operational risks, specialist risks (such as protective security and fraud), and project-specific risks.

Our key areas of risk and a summary of mitigation strategies are below:

KEY AREAS OF RISK	SUMMARY OF MITIGATING STRATEGIES
<p>IMPARTIALITY & INDEPENDENCE</p> <p>We are seen to be an instrument of a particular political party or are not perceived to be an independent, credible organisation.</p>	<p>Our outputs contain factual reporting and objective analysis, undertaken with documented assumptions.</p> <p>We are transparent in our workflow management and prioritisation processes.</p> <p>We strive to build a values-driven culture and actively embed and reinforce core values into our corporate culture.</p>
<p>RELEVANCE & INFLUENCE</p> <p>We are not seen to be relevant or influential.</p>	<p>We undertake regular consultation with external stakeholders, including the JCPAA, our expert panel, parliamentary committees, and external peers.</p> <p>We actively seek and respond to feedback.</p>
<p>RELATIONSHIPS WITH SERVICE PROVIDERS</p> <p>We fail to maintain productive and collaborative relationships with agencies which provide services, information, data, and models to us.</p>	<p>Our liaison, data provision and service arrangements are tailored with Commonwealth agencies and are underpinned by active and regular engagement.</p> <p>We meet regularly with our outsourced ICT service provider to raise issues, provide feedback, and discuss future opportunities.</p>
<p>CONFIDENCE IN DELIVERABLES</p> <p>Our deliverables are convincingly and publicly challenged.</p>	<p>We regularly monitor media and public references to PBO outputs to ensure accurate reporting.</p> <p>Our self-initiated publications are externally reviewed prior to release.</p> <p>Assessments of costing methodology are undertaken in consultation with external parties, agencies and the expert panel while confidentiality is maintained.</p>
<p>SENSITIVE INFORMATION</p> <p>Sensitive information held by or provided to us is inadvertently released because of accidental or intentional disclosure, or cyber-attack.</p>	<p>We annually assess our maturity against the Protective Security Policy Framework.</p> <p>We are undertaking a project to refresh our records management tools and enhance records management compliance.</p> <p>We regularly and systematically engage with our outsourced ICT provider at both an operational and strategic level to monitor and manage ICT risks.</p>
<p>PBO WORKFORCE</p> <p>We have difficulty attracting or retaining employees or are perceived to not provide a safe working environment.</p>	<p>We provide development and training opportunities, engaging work, and flexible working arrangements to attract and retain employees.</p> <p>We regularly monitor relevant workforce data to identify emerging workforce issues.</p> <p>We continue to engage with the other parliamentary departments to respond to the recommendations of the Jenkins Review.</p>

Performance

We have one purpose: to inform the parliament by providing independent and non-partisan analysis of the budget cycle, fiscal policy, and the financial implications of policy proposals.

Our performance framework is based on measuring:

- the relevance, quality, and timeliness of our outputs
- the independence, transparency, and integrity of our processes
- our operational effectiveness
- stakeholder satisfaction with our outputs and service experience.

To assess achievements against our purpose and to keep us accountable against our strategic priorities and outcomes, we use a mix of output, efficiency and effectiveness measures, and qualitative and quantitative methodologies. This ensures an appropriate balance in our reporting information and provides an unbiased assessment of our performance results.

Our performance targets, particularly those in relation to the level of demand for costing services, are linked to the election cycle. The measures of effectiveness seek to provide information on how our outputs contribute to improving public understanding of budget and fiscal policy issues.

We continue to refine our performance measures and targets to ensure that they reflect the changing nature of our work, including our focus on delivering value-add analysis more regularly and frequently through our self-initiated work program.

For 2023-24, we have updated some performance measures to better align with our key activities and refreshed their overall presentation. We will continue to review our measures and targets over the course of the year to ensure the ongoing appropriateness of our performance reporting framework.

Performance measures and targets should be read alongside the financial and performance information published in our portfolio budget statement (PBS). Achievement against the performance measures in this corporate plan and the PBS is monitored by the PBO Executive and will be reported in the PBO's annual performance statements at the end of the reporting period.

1. Output

1.1 Performance measure	Number of policy costing and budget analysis requests completed		
Outcome	Independent and informative analysis: Stable or increasing demand for and timely provision of costing services, particularly from repeat clients, suggests that the PBO’s outputs are relevant, of high quality and timely.		
Methodology	<p>Calculations are undertaken on raw data to verify the summary data. The calculations include adjustment for public holidays/non business days and hold time (periods when specifications are being clarified or where the requestor has directed the PBO to place a request on-hold). Manual adjustments may need to be made to completion dates for reissues of responses to requests.</p> <p>Requests are defined as the number of options or components (request options) provided to the parliamentarian in response to their request.</p> <p>Completion rates are influenced by factors including the timing of the election cycle, the volume of requests on hand and the need to seek additional data from agencies.</p>		
Data sources	The data sources used to assess performance against the target for this measure include the Parliamentarian Request App and SharePoint records. This includes the number of requests/options, date received, date completed and/or date withdrawn.		
Targets			
2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Equal to or greater than historical levels in the election cycle	Equal to or greater than historical levels in the election cycle	Equal to or greater than historical levels in the election cycle	Equal to or greater than historical levels in the election cycle
Target rationale	The demand for policy costing and budget analysis services is directly affected by the general election cycle. The target is based on an assessment of historical trends in the election cycle.		
Changes from previous year	No changes. The performance measure is retained from the 2022-23 Corporate Plan.		

1.2 Performance measure		Number of PBO self-initiated products			
Outcome	Independent and informative analysis: Demand for our publications suggests that our self-initiated work is relevant, of high quality and timely.				
Methodology	<p>The PBO has a mandate to undertake independent analysis of budget and fiscal issues. Our self-initiated work program seeks to improve budget transparency through the provision of interactive tools and analysis that promotes public understanding of these issues. Self-initiated products fall into two broad categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reports, tools, snapshots, data and analysis that are linked to the release of a Government fiscal update, such as the Budget. 2. Other products that build the knowledge and understanding of budget and fiscal issues, released when capacity allows. <p>'Self-initiated products' do not include those associated with corporate governance, or process and guidance material for parliamentarians.</p> <p>Assessment of the number of products publicly disclosed on the PBO website.</p>				
Data sources	The PBO website.				
Targets					
2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27		
The total number of publications in our annual self-initiated program is expected to be between 13 and 15 (in a non-election year), comprising of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 related to fiscal updates • 4-6 other products 	Publish half the total number of self-initiated products during an election year.	Maintain the total number of self-initiated products (for a non-election year).	Maintain the total number of self-initiated products (for a non-election year).		
Target rationale	<p>The target for the total number of self-initiated products considers resourcing and budget updates. The total number will vary depending on the number of Government fiscal updates in a given year and staff capacity.</p> <p>Fiscal update related releases include updates to existing publications in our annual work program:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Build your own budget</i> fiscal analysis tool – Budget update 2. <i>Build your own budget</i> fiscal analysis tool – MYEFO update 3. <i>Beyond the budget</i> medium-term projections & fiscal sustainability 4. Historical fiscal data – Budget update 5. Historical fiscal data – MYEFO update 6. Budget snapshot 7. MYEFO snapshot 8. <i>National fiscal outlook</i> whole-of-government fiscal analysis 9. Guide to the budget 				

Changes from previous year For performance measures and targets that relate to self-initiated work, the previously used terms ‘research products’ and ‘research reports’ have been replaced with ‘self-initiated products’ or ‘publications’ in the 2023-24 Corporate Plan. This reflects the scope of current and future products, particularly those regarding education and transparency (for example, Budget explainers, ‘snapshots’ and data).

The performance target previously included a split between ‘major’ and ‘occasional’ reports with specific numerical targets. The categories ‘major’ and ‘occasional’ have been removed from the 2023-24 Corporate Plan, as they have become less useful due to the changed nature of our publications. A publication such as the Budget snapshot, for example, could be considered as both ‘major’ and ‘occasional’.

The target for 2023-24 has been updated to include the total number of products for the annual work program, as well as separate numerical targets for two categories of publications – ‘fiscal update related releases’ and ‘other’.

1.3 Performance measure		Publication of the election commitments report within the legislated timeframe		
Outcome	Independent and informative analysis: The PBO measures the timeliness of the preparation of the election commitments report to provide evidence of compliance with its legislative obligations.			
Methodology	Assessment against the timeframe for the preparation of the election commitments report as set out in subsection 64MA (1A) of the <i>Parliamentary Service Act 1999</i> .			
	If an election was to occur late in the financial year, the PBO may publish the election commitments report early in the next financial year.			
Data sources	Data sources include the formal approval to publish by the Parliamentary Budget Officer and the publication date of the election commitments report on the PBO website.			
Targets				
	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
	Not applicable	Less than 30 days after the end of the caretaker period or seven days before the first sitting day of parliament	Not applicable	Not applicable
Target rationale	This is an output measure in relation to compliance.			
Changes from previous year	No changes. The performance measure is retained from the 2022-23 Corporate Plan.			

2. Efficiency

2.1 Performance measure		Median time to complete policy costing and budget analysis requests	
Outcome	Operational effectiveness and efficiency: Results are interpreted to provide evidence of the PBO’s performance in terms of efficiency of outputs as assessed by time to completion against our targets.		
Methodology	<p>Analysis of the number of requests/options, date received, date completed and/or date withdrawn.</p> <p>Timeliness is influenced by a number of factors, including the number of requests on hand, their complexity and whether we have to request information from other agencies to complete the request. The use of the number of request options seeks to be a proxy for complexity.</p> <p>We are tracking metrics that influence time to completion, such as the number of information requests from Commonwealth agencies to better understand their impact on delivery timeframes and to assist with further refinement of this measure in the future.</p>		
Data sources	The data sources used to assess performance against the target include the Parliamentarian Request App and SharePoint records.		
Targets			
2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Fewer than 15 business days (non-caretaker)	<p>Fewer than 15 business days (non-caretaker)</p> <p>Fewer than 5 business days (caretaker)</p>	Fewer than 15 business days (non-caretaker)	Fewer than 15 business days (non-caretaker)
Target rationale	Timeliness in relation to the completion of costing and budget analysis requests is the way in which the PBO is best able to measure efficiency.		
Changes from previous year	The methodology for this measure has been updated for 2023-24 to include reference to size and complexity metrics, which are utilised to provide further narrative around our performance results.		

2.2 Performance measure

Percentage of fiscal update related publications published at the time specified by our schedule

Outcome **Operational effectiveness and efficiency:** Publications are delivered in accordance with our schedule and published while the triggering event remains relevant.

Methodology Fiscal update related releases are triggered by the Government publishing new economic and fiscal estimates.

These publications fall into two categories:

1. Snapshots, historical data, and the budget guide, which are to be released within 3 days of the trigger event.
2. Deeper analysis and model updates, which are to be released within 2 months of the triggering event (*Build your own budget, Beyond the budget* and *National fiscal outlook*).

Assessment of the publication dates on our website for publications specified in category 1 and 2 above. The differentiated timing between category 1 and 2, reflects the extra information and analysis that needs to be incorporated in *Build your own budget, Beyond the budget* and the *National fiscal outlook*, compared to the other publications.

Data sources The PBO website

Targets

2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
100%	100%	100%	100%

Target rationale We have delivered in accordance with the timeframes specified in our schedule over the previous reporting period. The 100% target indicates the importance of publishing while the triggering event remains relevant.

Changes from previous year The performance measure previously referred to ‘major’ publications. The categories ‘major’ and ‘occasional’ have been removed throughout the 2023-24 Corporate Plan.

This measure has been updated to apply to ‘fiscal update related publications’ – which are defined in the methodology. Additionally, the methodology has been updated to outline publication timeframes.

This measure has been re-categorised as an efficiency measure, rather than a measure of output. Timeliness in relation to the delivery of publications is a proxy measure for efficiency.

No changes have been made to the performance target.

3. Effectiveness

3.1 Performance measure		Percentage of PBO publicly released parliamentary requests referenced in the public debate	
Outcome	Independent and informative analysis: The reference to PBO outputs in public debate suggests that PBO’s outputs are relevant. The independence, transparency, and integrity of the PBO’s processes may be inferred from the nature of the mentions.		
Methodology	<p>For the purposes of this measure, the term ‘PBO publicly released parliamentary requests’ refers to responses posted to the PBO website and includes requests for costings and analyses of the budget.</p> <p>Assessment of the number of references to PBO publicly released parliamentary requests sourced from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - daily media monitoring - speeches/media releases/interviews - other sources, as appropriate. 		
Targets			
2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
80% of publicly released parliamentary requests referenced by media sources	80% of publicly released parliamentary requests referenced by media sources	80% of publicly released parliamentary requests referenced by media sources	80% of publicly released parliamentary requests referenced by media sources
Target rationale	<p>The choice of the 80% target reflects the fact that not all publicly released costings are picked up by the media. For instance, some costing requests that are legislatively required to be publicly released (such as those completed on behalf of a Parliamentary Committee) may not be topical for the media cycle.</p> <p>Additionally, costing requests are automatically publicly released following completion where a request is submitted on a ‘non-confidential basis’ by a parliamentarian.</p>		
Changes from previous year	<p>The target for this performance measure has been amended from 100% to 80%.</p> <p>The term ‘costings’ has been replaced with ‘parliamentarian requests’ to reflect the fact that both budget analysis and costing requests are published.</p> <p>The performance measure has been amended to specifically reference ‘PBO publicly released’ parliamentary requests.</p>		

Outcome **Independent and informative analysis:** The number of publications reported on by the media indicates demand for our publications over time. The media has discretion over whether or not they report on our publications, including the quality of reporting they produce. Results are interpreted as evidence of PBO's contribution to the public debate and may demonstrate the level and extent of our influence. Traffic to the PBO website is also indicative of demand for material published on the website.

Methodology There are two sources of measurable demand for PBO publications: media reporting and website engagement.

Media reporting is measured through an assessment of the percentage of all publications reported on by a major news outlet. A 'major news outlet' is defined as a national news source with a substantial readership size.

Collection of website analytics including page views, time on page and visitor patterns via the PBO website.

Data sources Daily media monitoring (Hansard, print and online media, television, radio transcripts and media releases).

Website analytics data and reports.

Targets

2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Target to be developed (website analytics-related)	Maintain or increase	Maintain or increase	Maintain or increase
65% of all publications are reported on by a major news outlet	Maintain the percentage of all publications reported on by a major news outlet	Maintain the percentage of all publications reported on by a major news outlet	Maintain the percentage of all publications reported on by a major news outlet

Target rationale In June 2023, the PBO launched a new website with improved analytical ability.

As such, in 2023-24 we will explore tracking metrics such as time-on-page and user journey mapping via Google analytics to better measure demand for our publications. We will use the first half of the year to develop and road-test a target, and report against the target at the end of the year. Refinements to our methodology and data sources will be captured in the 2024-25 Corporate Plan.

The target of 65% for 'publications reported on by a major news outlet' is based on an analysis of historical trends and reflects the fact that not all publications in our annual work program are expected to gain attention from the media (for example, some budget explainers and our glossary). Excluding those publications, our target assumes that 80-100% of the rest are reported on by a major news outlet, depending on how many are published.

Changes from previous year The target in relation to the volume of media mentions has been removed to focus on web analytics as a more meaningful measure of demand.

Additionally, we have expanded the scope of the target for ‘publications reported on by a major news outlet’ to capture all publications instead of a sub-set.

In response to this change, the target for 2023-24 has been amended from 100% to 65% (refer to target rationale). The target for forward years is to maintain the percentage of all publications reported on by a major news outlet.

3.3 Performance measure		Demand for the election commitments report			
Outcome	Independent and informative analysis: The number and nature of media mentions indicate demand for our election commitments report over time. Results are interpreted as evidence of the PBO’s contribution to the public debate.				
Methodology	Assessment of the number and nature (positive/negative or neutral) of media mentions related to the election commitments report. When assessing the nature of media references, PBO analysts are making their own judgment against a set of descriptors. For example, references are considered ‘neutral’ if they relate to the PBO’s function or outputs without accompanying descriptive language.				
Data sources	Daily media monitoring (Hansard, print and online media, television, radio transcripts and media releases).				
Targets					
	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	
	Not applicable	90% of mentions are positive or neutral	Not applicable	Not applicable	
Target rationale	Depending on the timing of the election, the PBO may publish the election commitments report early in the next financial year. Media mentions may also be assessed in the year following the election.				
Changes from previous year	No changes from the previous year.				

3.4 Performance measure Proportion of pre-election PBO responses to Parliamentary Requests that have informed election commitments (election commitments report-specific)

Outcome **Independent and informative analysis:** The usefulness of our costings and budget analysis and the trust placed in the agency in informing the election platforms of non-government parties and individuals, as measured by the proportion of commitments included in the election commitments report that are informed by work done by the PBO.

Methodology Performance results are calculated as commitments determined by the Parliamentary Budget Officer as meeting the criteria for inclusion in the election commitments report that were informed by PBO work, divided by, all commitments included in the election commitments report.

Data sources This measure draws on real-time, quality assured data already captured as part of the preparation of the election commitments report.

Targets

2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Not applicable	60%	Not applicable	Not applicable

Target rationale The target is informed by historical levels (2016: 51%, 2019: 50%, 2022: 60%). Note, should an election occur late in 2024-25, reporting on results against this performance measure will be reflected in the following financial year’s Annual Performance Statement (consistent with our approach to reporting on election commitments report-related performance measures).

Changes from previous year The term ‘PBO costings’ has been replaced with ‘PBO responses to Parliamentary requests’. It has also been clarified that it is the Parliamentary Budget Officer’s decision as to whether commitments meet the criteria for inclusion in the report.

The performance target for forward years (2024-25) has been revised from 65% to 60%.

This is a relatively new measure. A baseline was established for the 2022-23 Corporate Plan reflecting past commitment lists (60%). We have chosen not to increase the target for 2024-25 as there is inherent uncertainty in how political parties and parliamentarians will choose to approach an election.

3.5 Performance measure

Proportion of feedback from stakeholders that indicates a high-level of satisfaction regarding the quality of the service and outputs provided by the PBO

Outcome

Service excellence:

Feedback from our stakeholders (including parliamentarians) indicates they are satisfied with the **customer service quality** (support, engagement, and timeliness of this service) and the **website and digital tools**, (accessibility, functionality, and usability) provided by the PBO.

Independent and informative analysis:

Feedback indicates our outputs (self-initiated products, policy costings and budget analysis and election commitments report) are **relevant, high quality and timely**, and/or our work is undertaken with independence, transparency, and integrity.

Methodology

The PBO's stakeholders include Parliamentarians and their advisers and staff, Parliamentary committees, the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit, Presiding Officers, Commonwealth agencies, the media, and the general public.

The nature of feedback received from the following sources is assessed:

- PBO stakeholder survey (undertaken every 3 years).
- Ad hoc and unsolicited feedback provided by stakeholders.
- One-on-one, semi-structured interviews with a sample of stakeholders (undertaken every six-months).
- Informal feedback via email/private briefings/meetings.
- Other sources, as appropriate.

Interview questions for the semi-structured interviews are drawn from the triannual PBO stakeholder survey to ensure alignment across points of data, but also include targeted questions regarding a specific topic or area of focus, for example, adoption and usability of digital tools.

Data sources

As above.

Targets

2023-24

85% of feedback is positive or neutral

2024-25

85% of feedback is positive or neutral

2025-26

85% of feedback is positive or neutral

2026-27

85% of feedback is positive or neutral

Target rationale

A target of 85% recognises that at times, we will receive feedback that indicates the need to vary or improve our services. Constructive feedback from our stakeholders which identifies opportunities for improvement is welcomed.

Changes from previous year

The performance measure was previously documented as 'Satisfaction and/or perception of Stakeholders'.

The performance measure regarding ‘satisfaction’ previously included media mentions. We have chosen to present media mentions as a separate measure in 2023-24.

Interviews with stakeholders post completion of a selected sample of costing requests have been removed from our methodology following a trial to focus on systematically capturing ad hoc and unsolicited feedback from stakeholders, in conjunction with semi-structured interviews, and the triannual stakeholder survey.

Separate targets for customer service quality and outputs have been combined.

3.6 Performance measure	Proportion of media mentions that indicate our outputs are of high-quality and that we are perceived as independent, robust, and/or non-partisan			
Outcome	Media mentions demonstrate how we are perceived as an agency by our external stakeholders.			
Methodology	<p>Assessment of the number and nature (positive/negative or neutral) of media mentions across costings, reports and function.</p> <p>When assessing the nature of media references, PBO analysts are making their own judgment against a set of descriptors. For example, references are considered ‘neutral’ if they relate to the PBO’s function or outputs without accompanying descriptive language.</p>			
Data sources	Daily media monitoring (Hansard, print and online media, television, radio transcripts and media releases).			
Targets				
	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
	90% of mentions are positive or neutral	90% of mentions are positive or neutral	90% of mentions are positive or neutral	90% of mentions are positive or neutral
Target rationale	The target is informed by historical levels.			
Changes from previous year	<p>The performance measure was previously combined with stakeholder satisfaction regarding the quality of our customer service and output.</p> <p>It is presented as a separate performance measure for the purposes of the 2023-24 Corporate Plan.</p> <p>The target has not changed.</p>			

Appendix A



Parliamentary Budget Office

PLANNED ACTIVITIES BY FUNCTION

JULY 2023 TO JUNE 2024

LEGEND

- ✓ ACTIVITY COMPLETE
- ACTIVITY COMMENCED

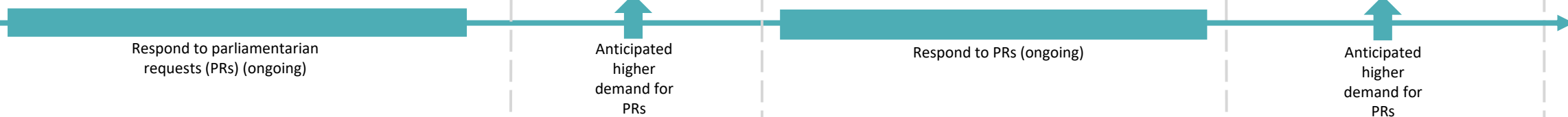
July to December 2023

January to June 2024

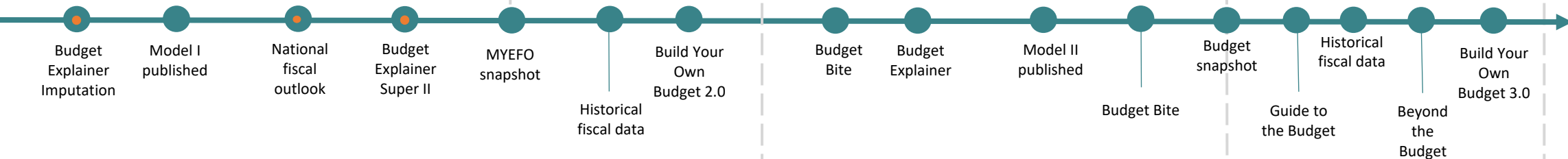
2023-24
MYEFO

2024-25
Budget

POLICY COSTINGS & BUDGET ANALYSIS



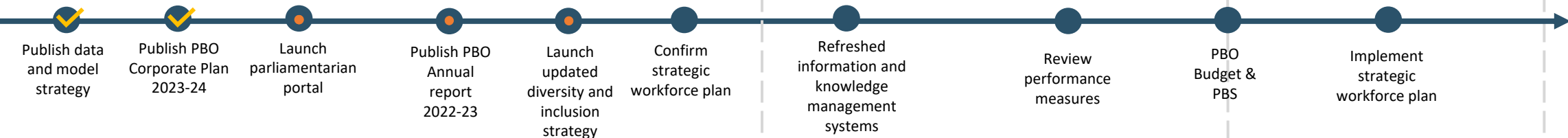
SELF-INITIATED PRODUCTS



ELECTION COMMITMENTS REPORT



PEOPLE & SYSTEMS



EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

