



Parliamentary
Budget Office

Budget Insights

PBO SEMINAR

PBO and the next general election

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22 August 2024

www.pbo.gov.au



Agenda



About the PBO



What is the Election commitments report



What happens to costings during the election period



Preparing for the next general election

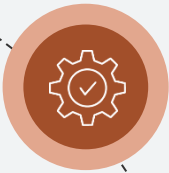


Working with the PBO



Questions

What is the Australian PBO?



Established in 2012



Parliamentary Service Act 1999



Independent department of the Parliament of Australia



Our purpose is to inform parliament by providing independent and non-partisan analysis of the budget cycle, fiscal policy and financial implications of proposals

Purpose and functions of the PBO



This service is available to Committees

Policy costings & budget analysis

Prepare high quality policy costings and budget analyses at the request of parliamentarians in a timely manner.

Develop and maintain our costing and projection models and databases.



Self-initiated activity

Publish research papers that promote a better public understanding of the budget and fiscal policy settings, with a particular focus on the sustainability of the budget over the medium term.



Election commitments report

Prepare and publish a report analysing the budget impact of the election commitments of parliamentary parties after the next general election.

What is the Election commitments report?

About the Election commitments report



Accountability

Holds parties to account for announcements during election campaigns



Transparency

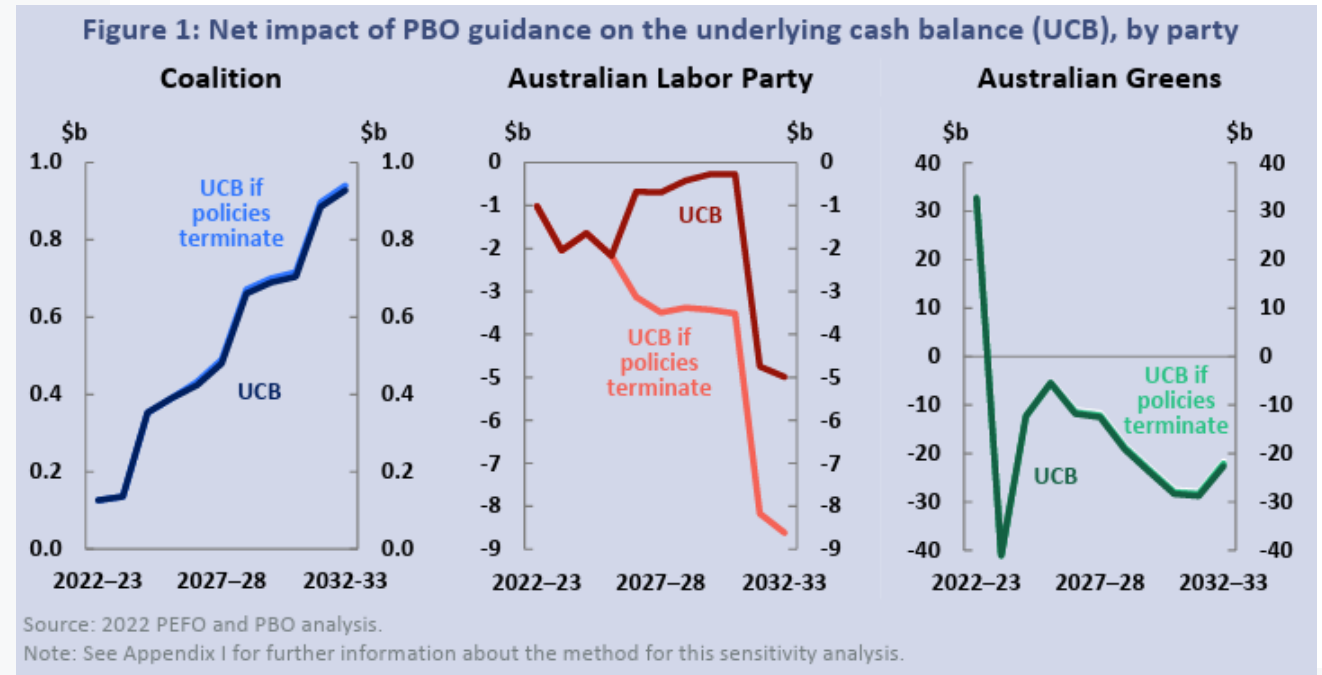
Increases transparency, especially over the medium term



Access to costing detail

Provides access to costing detail

Impact of 2022 election commitments



About the Election commitments report

A report analysing the budget impact of election commitments of ‘designated’ or major parties (5 or more members).

The PBO will decide whether any statements made during the election campaign (but not included on the list of commitments provided), constitute party election commitments for the purposes of the report

These arrangements apply to the major parties whose commitments must be included in the report, and to minor parties and independents that choose to opt in to the report.

About the Election commitments report

Must include financial impacts of all the election commitments that have a *material impact* on the budget for each major party (minor parties and independents can opt-in)

Must include the total combined impact of each party's election commitments on the budget for the forward estimates

Will also include medium-term estimates for each commitment (in \$ terms) and the total combined impact (as % of GDP only)

Must be released within 30 days of the end of the caretaker period or seven days prior to the first sitting of the new parliament, whichever is later.

Minor parties and independents

Minor parties and independents can choose to opt in to be included the ECR

Notify and engage early with the PBO of a decision to opt in

Provide the PBO with a list of election commitments

PBO will calculate, document and include the financial impact of significant interactions in a similar manner to its treatment for designated parties.

The combined impact of each minor party's/independent's election commitments will be included in an addendum to the Election commitments report

What happens to costings during the election period?

About the election caretaker period

During the period preceding an election for the House of Representatives, the government assumes a 'caretaker role'.

The caretaker period begins at the time the House is dissolved and continues until the government is returned or, if there is a change of government, until the new government has been sworn in.

Parliamentarian request function

The PBO will progress 2 types of costings during the election period:

1

Caretaker costings (priority)

- **Must** be a publicly announced policy
- **Must** only be submitted to either the PBO or The Treasury/Department of Finance – not both
- The request and response **will be** publicly released

2

Pre-caretaker costings

- PBO will continue to progress confidential costings that were submitted ahead of the caretaker period
- The request and response will **remain** confidential
- No changes can be made to the specifications once caretaker commences

How to make a request during caretaker?

- Parliamentary parties and independent parliamentarians can request costings of their publicly announced election policies
- A formal request must be submitted by the parliamentarian to pbo@pbo.gov.au
- Use the *Caretaker Costing Request template* to submit a request



Please call us on 02 6277 9500 if you need help completing the template. Remember to include a signed letter from the parliamentarian, or email from the parliamentarian's aph.gov.au account, that requests we undertake this costing. Send requests to pbo@pbo.gov.au.

Policy costing request – Caretaker Period

Name of policy request: <i>For example 'increase the child care subsidy'</i>	
Parliamentarian requesting costing:	<i>Parliamentarian's name</i>
Party request is on behalf of:	<i>Party's name</i>
Confidentiality	<i>Under section 64J of the Parliamentary Service Act 1999, all costings submitted during the caretaker period are public. Completed costings are published on the PBO website shortly after delivery to the requesting Parliamentarian.</i>
Announcement details	<i>Under section 64J costings during the caretaker period must be for 'publicly announced policy' of the parliamentary party or independent member making the request. Include details of when the policy was announced, who made the announcement and attach any policy documentation.</i>
Contact officer details	
Contact officer's name and position:	<i>Usually a parliamentarian's advisor.</i>
Email address:	<i>Best email for contact officer and delivery of response</i>
Phone number:	<i>We usually call first to discuss questions about a request and follow up with an email.</i>
Description of policy	
Purpose or intention of the policy:	<i>A description of the policy's purpose helps to ensure that we understand the higher-level objective of what is being requested, particularly in more detailed policy specifications, eg 'This policy aims to encourage low income families who use child care to enter the workforce'.</i>
Summary of policy specification:	<i>Insert a description of the policy changes and how these would be implemented eg 'increase the level of child care subsidy available to families with income below \$50,000 by 20 per cent'. Please outline any additional analysis (in addition to the financial information) that is required, for example:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the number of people or businesses affected</i> • <i>distributional impacts across the population. For example, distribution across:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>income</i> ○ <i>gender</i> ○ <i>age etc.</i> <i>Distributional analysis can help outline who is impacted by this proposal. For detailed requests, attach an example of how you would like the information to be presented. Also attach any additional information such as policy documents or announcements.</i>
Policy start date:	<i>This is the start date for the policy, eg '1 July 2022'.</i>
Is the policy ongoing?	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing <input type="checkbox"/> Non-ongoing <i>Ongoing policies continue in perpetuity, non-ongoing policies cease after a specified time period. For example 'This policy would have effect for three years from 1 July 2020'.</i>
Would elements of this policy be indexed over time? if so, by what index?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>Detail any indexation arrangements that would apply to the proposal (for example some Australian Government payments and elements of the tax system increase each year in line with an economic series such as the consumer price index).</i>
Is this a capped funding proposal?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>If Yes, will departmental funding be drawn from the capped amount?</i>



How the PBO prepares for the next general election

Phases of election period work for the PBO

1

Preparation

Prepare our people, systems and processes to respond to the election when it is called.

2

Caretaker

Respond to costing requests as they are lodged (public) and the stock of requests lodged prior to caretaker (confidential).
Track all election commitments made by major parties and anyone that opts in.

3

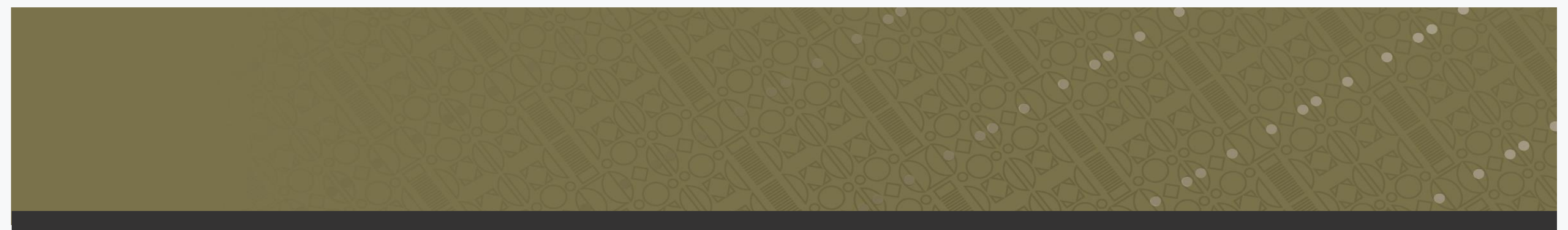
Election commitments report (ECR)

Prepare and publish a report analysing the budget impact of the election commitments of parliamentary parties after the next general election.

4

Parliament induction

Introduce new members of Parliament to the PBO through formal induction sessions, individual briefings and establishing relationships with key staffers.



Working with the PBO ahead of the next general election

Parliamentarian preparations

Engage

Major parties are encouraged to engage early and often with the PBO – especially with the view to have an election platform fully costed at least once by the PBO ahead of the caretaker period

Educate

Familiarise yourself with the election guidance notes and your obligations for the Election commitments report

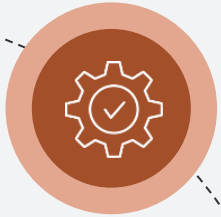
Opt-in

Minor parties and independent parliamentarians have until 14 days prior to polling day to opt-in. If you then decide to opt-out you have until 5pm on the day before polling day to let us know

Reach out

If you would like the PBO to tailor some guidance materials for your party or staff, please get in touch

Resources



[The next general election](#)

Information and guidance material leading up to the next general election



[For parliamentarians](#)

Guidance materials created for parliamentarians and staffers to understand PBO's services



[How to make a request during caretaker](#)

Parliamentarian requests for policy costings during caretaker

How to get in touch with us

Drop-in

We will be running regular drop-in sessions, but you can also visit PBO for consultations.

We are located in Parliament House in the Senate wing (S1.115)

Call or email us

02 6277 9500
pbo@pbo.gov.au

Visit our website

www.pbo.gov.au



Questions?

Thank you

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Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

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