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23 January 2020

Lucy Wicks MP
Chair
Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

REVIEW OF THE OPERATIONS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICE 2019-20

Dear Chair

On behalf of the Opposition, we thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit inquiry reviewing the operations of the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO).

The Parliamentary Budget Office, established by the former Labor Government in 2012 with the support of the Liberal and National Parties and the Greens, is an important part of our parliamentary democracy. It has provided a valuable and vital service to non-government parties and the Parliament since its establishment, through the provision of costings and associated information.

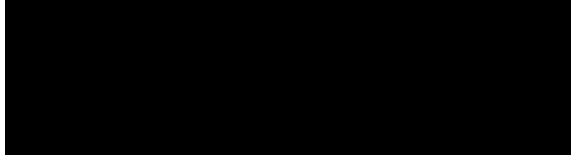
It has assisted the Opposition, and other non-government parties, in the last two Federal Election campaigns to ensure policies are properly costed. This is critically important for our democracy.

As recognised by the independent review and the Australian National Audit Office, the PBO has informed the public debate and strengthened the fiscal policy discussion. The provision of information to the Parliament – such as a breakdown of the Government's income tax plan packages – is a clear example of this.

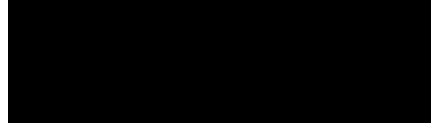
A properly costed policy agenda for the alternative government of the day also has the advantage of benefiting the community through increasing trust in politics. If alternative governments are able to present fully costed policies backed up by a professional, independent costing body, this should help increase trust and confidence in the political system.

The hard work and professionalism of the Parliamentary Budget Officer and the staff of the PBO has been appreciated and valued by the Opposition. We believe we have a strong and professional working relationship with the PBO and we hope that will continue into the future, and trust that the value of the PBO is appreciated by all parties and members of the Parliament.

Yours sincerely



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