



Parliament of Australia
Parliamentary Budget Office

Parliamentary Budget Office Australia

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Role of the PBO

To inform the Parliament by providing independent and non-partisan analysis of the budget cycle, fiscal policy and the financial implications of proposals

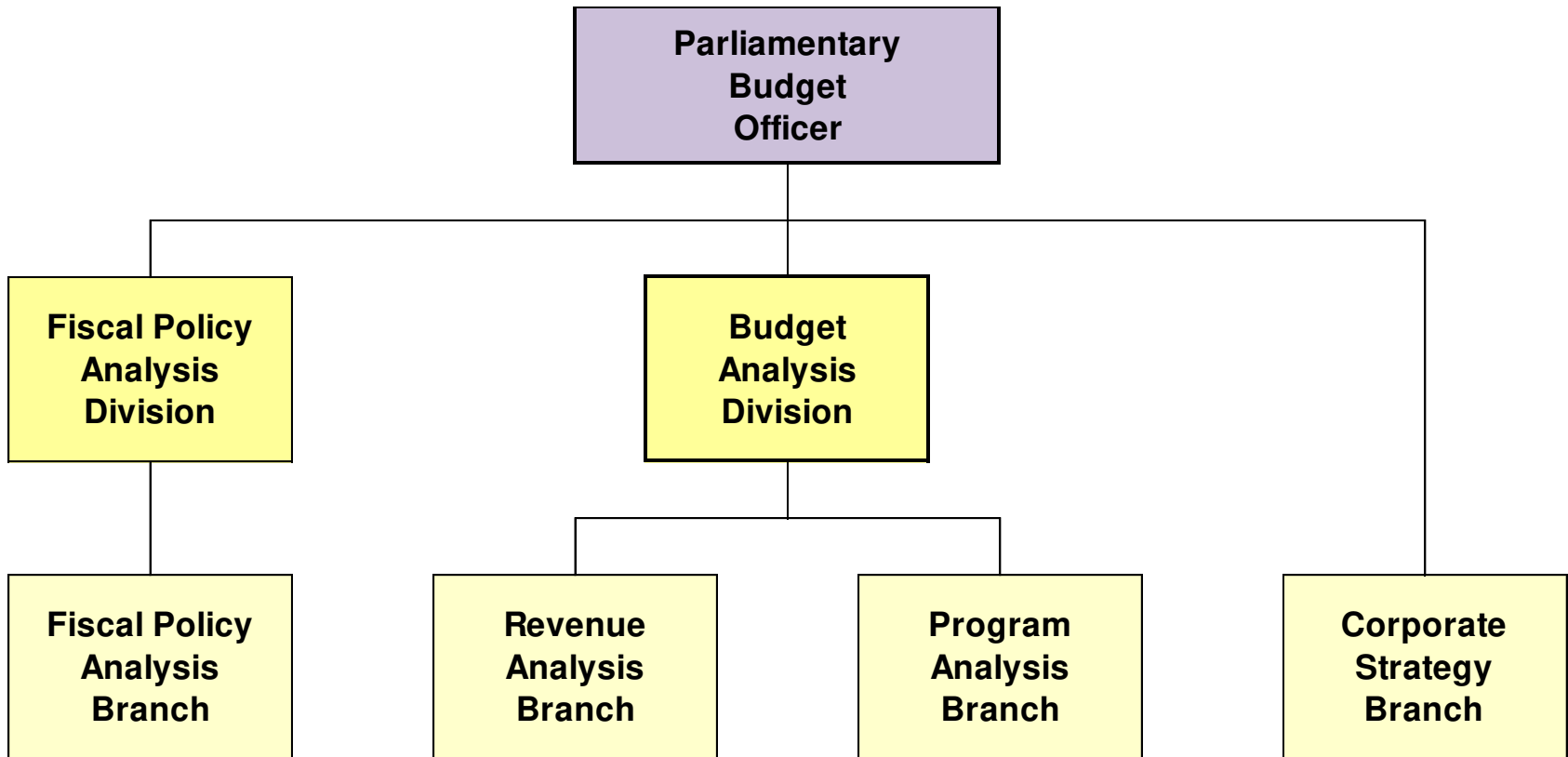
Functions of the PBO

- Prepare policy costings on request by parliamentarians
 - may be confidential, except during election period
- Prepare budget analyses on request by parliamentarians
 - may be on a confidential basis
- Prepare submissions to inquiries of Parliamentary Committees
- Conduct and publish research on the budget and fiscal policy settings

Commencement of operations

- PBO commenced operations on 23 July 2012
- Staffing currently totals 24
- Full staffing complement will total 30 – 35, with additional surge capacity in election years

PBO top structure





Key priorities for 2012-13

- To place the PBO on a fully operational footing with the capacity to fulfil its mandate as a responsive and effective independent and non-partisan institution of the Parliament
- To gain the trust of the Parliament in the PBO as a valued source of budget and fiscal policy analyses and policy costings that strengthen the policy development process and enhance the transparency of the budget and fiscal policy

Demand for the PBO's services

- The PBO has been accepting requests for work since September 2012
- To date the PBO has received more than 200 requests for work
- Majority of requests are from non-government political parties for policy costings on a confidential basis

PBO's policy costing role

- Confidentiality of costings outside election period helps facilitate development of better considered policies
- Having professional costings helps focus the public debate on the substance of policies rather than on the accuracy of costings

PBO's published work program

- Focusses on the underlying structure of budget and fiscal sustainability over the medium to longer term including:
 - structural budget balance
 - trends in major ongoing expenditure programs
 - impacts of tax expenditures

Access to information

- PBO has an MOU with Australian Government agencies for the provision of information
- MOU has a pro-disclosure bias; reasons for non-disclosure must be provided in writing
- MOU includes strict confidentiality provisions
- PBO is exempt from the Freedom of Information Act

PBO's accountability

- Annual report to the Parliament
- Regular dialogue with the Parliament's Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit
- Appearances before the Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
- Legislation provides that an independent review of the PBO's operations may be undertaken after each general election