

OFFICE OF
THE PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICER



BUREAU DU
DIRECTEUR PARLEMENTAIRE DU BUDGET

2013-14 Report on Activities of the Parliamentary Budget Office

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This Report on Activities is published as part of the Parliamentary Budget Office's (PBO) strategic priorities and is intended to help parliamentarians understand how the PBO works, the challenges it encounters, and its achievements in the last fiscal year (FY), from April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014.

The PBO provides independent, authoritative, and non-partisan fiscal and economic analysis to parliamentarians. This includes analysing the nation's finances, the government's estimates, and economic trends, as well as costing proposals within federal jurisdiction when requested by parliamentarians.

Studies published by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) suggest that fiscal councils, including the PBO, contribute to stronger fiscal performance and more accurate and less biased fiscal forecasting. The PBO received a positive evaluation in an IMF case study considering its work, and its model is being replicated in Ontario and has recently been under consideration in Alberta and Quebec.

Operational statistics for the 2013-14 FY demonstrate that the PBO provides a major contribution to parliamentary and public debate and makes substantial contributions to budget transparency, understanding, and practices.

While overall the quality of government's fiscal reporting is improving, the fact that the Government does not disclose the details of Direct Program Expenses (DPE) or reconcile the Budget and Estimates continue to pose challenges for effective fiscal oversight.

Parliament may consider strengthening the PBO by addressing legally questionable refusals to provide the PBO with the data to which it is entitled and granting it funding commensurate with the demands placed upon it and IMF recommendations.

In the coming years, the PBO will continue to make progress towards the objectives outlined in its 2013-18 Strategic Plan. This includes adding new high-quality products and services, expanding its social media presence, supporting professional development and defending the PBO's right to data.

Message from the Parliamentary Budget Officer

I am pleased to present the first Report on Activities of the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO), which covers the 2013-14 fiscal year (FY).

The PBO provides independent fiscal and economic analysis to parliamentarians to support and strengthen their ability to hold the government to account for the raising and spending of public money. As Parliamentary Budget Officer, I believe this function is central to Canada's system of responsible government.

The 2013-14 FY marked a renewal for the Office. It was my first year as head of the PBO, which provided me an opportunity to refine its strategic direction. In doing so, I initiated a new set of projects that will materialize over the medium and longer term, as some projects had been timed to wrap up prior to the transition in leadership.

In the coming year, the PBO team will continue to make progress towards the objectives outlined in its 2013-18 Strategic Plan. This will include adding new high-quality products and services, expanding its social media presence, supporting professional development and defending the PBO's right to data.

The single most significant barrier the PBO faces to fulfilling its mandate is access to government information. In the 2013-14 FY, departments fulfilled only 55% of the PBO's information requests, in some cases falling short of their legal obligations under the *Parliament of Canada Act*.

Without timely access to good quality, electronic government information, the PBO's ability to provide parliamentarians with accurate and relevant analysis is significantly hampered, and its resources are unnecessarily tied up in seeking access to information.

I hope that parliamentarians, parliamentary partners and other interested parties, find this report informative.

Jean-Denis Fréchette
Parliamentary Budget Officer

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1. Introduction and Overview

The position of Parliamentary Budget Officer was created in December 2006 as part of the *Federal Accountability Act*¹ to provide transparency and credibility to the government's fiscal forecasting and budgeting. It was hoped that the Parliamentary Budget Office's (PBO) oversight would promote truth in budgeting and foster trust in government.²

The current Parliamentary Budget Officer, Jean-Denis Fréchette, was appointed on September 3, 2013. He is assisted by a group of about 15 full-time staff in providing independent financial and economic analysis to parliamentarians.

The PBO had a budget of \$2.8 million (m) for the 2013-14 fiscal year (FY), the same budget accorded to the office in the first year of operation in 2008-09. Since 2008, the PBO has produced more than 200 publications.³

Box 1-1: Independent evaluation

An independent 2013 International Monetary Fund report concludes:

"The PBO has earned a reputation for good quality independent analysis for its research, costings, and forecasting work. The strategy of being front and center on the fiscal policy issues of the day, combined with transparent reporting, and an active media approach, has proven successful in raising the media profile and

the influence of the council. It has, however, also placed the council at the center of many high profile disputes with the government resulting in the PBO turning to the courts for clarification on issues related to its institutional set up and independence."⁴

1.1. Mandate and Mission

The mandate of the Parliamentary Budget Officer is to provide independent and objective analysis to Parliament on the state of the nation's finances, the government's estimates and trends in the Canadian economy; and upon request from a committee or parliamentarian, to estimate the financial cost of any proposal for matters over which Parliament has jurisdiction.⁵

Accordingly, the PBO's mission statement is as follows:

The PBO will support parliamentarians in carrying out their constitutional roles of scrutinizing the raising and spending of public monies and generally overseeing the government's activities by providing financial, economic, and budgetary analysis.

1.2. Key Features

Three features of the Parliamentary Budget Officer are worth noting: he is independent, authoritative and non-partisan.

He is independent in that he is insulated from political influence. As noted by the Federal Court:

By establishing the position of a Parliamentary Budget Officer and enshrining his or her

¹ *Federal Accountability Act*, SC 2006, c 9, s 116.

² Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, *Federal Accountability Action Plan*, (Ottawa: Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada represented by the President of the Treasury Board) at 13, online: TBS <<http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/faa-lfi/docs/ap-pa/ap-pa-eng.pdf>>; Prime Minister's Office, News Release, "Federal Accountability Act introduced" (11 April 2006) online: PMO <<http://www.pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2006/04/11/federal-accountability-act-introduced>>.

³ For a complete list, see the PBO website.

⁴ Teresa Curristine, Jason Harris, and Johann Seiwald, *Case Studies of Fiscal Councils – Functions and Impact* (16 July 2013), online: IMF Website

<<https://www.imf.org/external/np/pp/eng/2013/071613a.pdf>>, at 19.

⁵ See *Parliament of Canada Act* RSC 1985 c P-1 s 79.2.

mandate in legislation, Parliament intended that independent, *i.e.* independent from Government; financial analysis should be available to any member of Parliament, given the possibility that the Government of the day may be a majority government with strong party discipline.⁶

Thus, the Parliamentary Budget Officer and his team analyze the available data and come to their own conclusions without deference to the methods used by government departments.

The PBO's independence arises from its intended role more than from the formal protections offered by statute. Those statutory protections are in fact quite modest: The Parliamentary Budget Officer is chosen by the Governor in Council from a list of three names selected by a committee chaired by the Parliamentary Librarian. He holds office for a five-year renewable term during pleasure.⁷

A second key feature of the Parliamentary Budget Officer is that his work is authoritative. As noted by an academic commentator, "the work produced by the PBO and his staff is widely acknowledged to be as authoritative as any private sector equivalent."⁸ Likewise, as noted above, an IMF study found that the PBO "has earned a reputation for good quality independent analysis for its research, costings, and forecasting work."⁹

Most PBO employees are economists or financial analysts with advanced degrees and years of

experience in the public service. On larger and more complex files, such as military acquisitions, the Parliamentary Budget Officer and his staff incorporate an independent peer review to provide guidance and assure the results meet the highest standards of quality.¹⁰

Finally, the Parliamentary Budget Officer is non-partisan. He and his team conduct analysis for standing committees and parliamentarians, without regard to their political affiliation. Unlike advocacy groups and think tanks that receive private funding, he is not influenced by donors or beholden to a particular political ideology. He and his team apply accepted economic methodologies to provide independent analysis to Parliament.

Because the PBO provides a second perspective on economic and fiscal matters that often contrasts with analysis released by the government, its work is sometimes used for political purposes.

Opposition members will sometimes request analyses of contentious matters. The resulting public reports are used as an authority against which government claims or actions can be tested.¹¹

Even where requests are submitted by individual parliamentarians, all their colleagues in Parliament have an equal interest in the fruits of the request. For example, estimates of the total economic and financial cost associated with remediating contaminated sites are useful for all Senators and MPs in determining whether sufficient funding has

⁶ *Page v Mulcair*, 2013 FC 402 at para 46 (available on Canlii).

⁷ Karine Azoulay, "Making the Case: Canada's PBO, the Courts and the Fourth Branch of Government" (2014) 8 *Journal of parliamentary and political law* at 114 (Radar a607638).

⁸ Azoulay, *supra* note 7 at 115.

⁹ Curristine, *supra* note 4 at 19.

¹⁰ For example, see Erin K. Barkel and Tolga R. Yalkin, *Feasibility of Budget for Acquisition of Two Joint Support Ships*, (Ottawa: Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer 2013) at 2.

¹¹ Azoulay, *supra* note 7 at 115.

been allocated in the Budget to cleaning up the sites.¹²

1.3. Internal Organization

The PBO is led by the Parliamentary Budget Officer. Workflow within the team is managed by the Assistant Parliamentary Budget Officer. The efforts of all staff support the PBO's mission to inform parliamentarians and improve budget transparency.

Figure 1-1 Internal Organization of PBO (Oct 2014)



Note: As per senior analysts and analysts, the above organizational chart is illustrative. The actual number of senior analysts and analysts changes from time to time.

Staff and resources are managed centrally. This allows the office, which consists of fifteen full time personnel, to work nimbly, maximizing the impact of the office's scarce resources. Resources are allocated to work based on the risk and materiality framework developed by the PBO in its infancy.

While working on a variety of files, analysts generally undertake specialized, distinct work. Economists provide economic and fiscal analysis, outlooks and risk assessments. This analysis relies heavily on the use of econometric and statistical models and includes broader research on macroeconomic and fiscal policy. Financial analysts analyze program costs and estimates, assess budgetary systems, apply due-diligence and provide cost estimates on proposals that fall under Parliament's jurisdiction. This work often involves assessing business cases and developing cost methodologies.

In addition to this structure, the PBO is supported by two experienced administrative assistants and a general counsel.

1.4. Operating Principles

The PBO's work is guided by four operational principles:¹³

- 1) Independence: The PBO's analysis is always independent, objective and non-partisan.
- 2) Open and transparent publishing model: The PBO's analysis is always openly reported to standing committees and parliamentarians and is freely-accessible on its public website.
- 3) Collaboration and partnering: The PBO can work with academics, think tanks, consulting firms and external experts to ensure that it is providing authoritative analysis. Peer review is used when appropriate to ensure the quality and credibility of the analysis.

¹² Rod Story & Tolga R. Yalkin, *Federal Contaminated Sites Cost* (Ottawa: Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, 2014).

¹³ Parliamentary Budget Office, *Operational Plan*, PBO website: <http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/files/files/Operational_Plan.pdf>.

- 4) Setting priorities based on materiality and contribution potential: Of these two concepts, materiality is the PBO's primary over-riding principle for setting priorities.

Box 1-2: PBO Prioritization of requests

The PBO prioritizes requests which are financially material and have the greatest potential impact.

Financially material: A project or request is material if it can reasonably be expected to have a substantial impact on the government's finances, estimates or the Canadian economy.

Potential Impact: A project or request has the potential to increase budget transparency and/or promote informed parliamentary and public dialogue towards implementing sound budget policy and financial management if it can:

- a) strengthen fiscal discipline;
- b) better allocate the government's resources to priorities; and/or
- c) increase operational efficiency.

For example, the PBO's longest ongoing project is an estimate of the financial cost, in terms of forgone revenue, of cuts to CRA enforcement. This is financially material because the cuts and their potential impact are massive. It also has a massive potential impact because increasing tax evasion could threaten Canada's long-term fiscal health. When complete, the project will inform the allocation of resources between enforcement and other priorities, and even potentially increase operational efficiency by indicating how enforcement could be better targeted.

1.5. Products

Pursuant to its mandate to report on the state of the nation's finances, the government's estimates and trends in the Canadian economy, the PBO produces:

- an annual economic and fiscal outlook, and occasional updates;
- an annual labour market assessment;
- an annual fiscal sustainability report;

- quarterly reviews of federal program spending; and
- analysis of the main and supplementary estimates.

All of these periodic publications were produced in the 2013-14 FY.

The PBO's mandate also includes estimating the financial cost of any proposal for matters over which Parliament has jurisdiction. For example, in the 2013-14 FY, the PBO produced reports requested by parliamentarians to:

- undertake an independent fiscal analysis of absenteeism in the public service;
- estimate the cost premium associated with building the Royal Canadian Navy's Joint Support Ships at Vancouver's Seaspans Shipyards rather than a shipyard in the United States;
- analyze the fiscal impact of the Last Post Fund, "which provides funeral, burial and grave marking benefits to eligible...veterans",¹⁴ and
- estimate the foregone revenue incurred by the implementation of an Adult Fitness Tax Credit.

A typical report contains an analysis of trends in the results and the factors driving them, as well as an explanation of the methodology used by the government departments and by the PBO to estimate the costs in question, highlighting any major differences.¹⁵

¹⁴ <http://www.lastpostfund.ca/EN/aboutus.php>.

¹⁵ For example, see Erin K. Barkel, *Fiscal Analysis of Sick Leave in the Federal Public Service*, (Ottawa: Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer 2014).

1.6. Hiring

The PBO disproportionately hires senior analysts, that is, those with advanced degrees and experience in the public service. Senior analysts bring the knowledge and credentials necessary to critically assess claims made by governments. The management team itself, including directors and senior directors, are expected to produce their own analysis as well as assist in the management of the office.

While many of the PBO's initial staff members were on secondment, the majority of employees are now indeterminate.

The PBO faces a unique challenge in staffing. On one hand, its reputation, its impact and its expert team greatly appeal to exceptional analysts seeking to prove themselves. On the other hand, it is difficult to recruit senior managers: the roles are demanding; they must mentor other analysts in their work and produce their own analysis.

As a consequence, managers must possess exceptional technical expertise and organizational skills to be able to succeed. It is difficult to find analysts with this level of expertise willing to leave secure employment in the public service.

1.7. Stakeholders

The PBO's primary stakeholders are Senators and MPs, who, collectively, the PBO serves, and they all have an interest in the results of the PBO's analysis. The PBO stays in regular contact with the Senate and House of Commons through participation in committee meetings and direct, bilateral meetings with parliamentarians.

On behalf of Senators and MPs, the PBO maintains good relationships with the Canadian public and media. The PBO's analysis is useful to parliamentarians as an authority upon which policy

and discussion can be grounded. To be an effective authority, the PBO's reports must be publically available and, ideally, widely understood. Reinterpretation by the media plays a significant role in ensuring that the broadest audience possible understands PBO reports and their relevancy.

Figure 1-2 PBO appearance on "The West Block"¹⁶



To this end, the Office has developed an effective relationship with the nation's media. PBO analysts regularly brief members of the media on their reports, while the PBO and the Assistant PBO participate in interviews related to their findings. The media, in turn, diffuse interpretations and summaries of technical analysis allowing the public to be better seized of fiscal issues facing the nation.

¹⁶ "Better late than never, PBO says while still digging into Tory budget Cuts", *Global News* (9 February 2014).

2. The PBO's Performance

2.1. Theoretical Framework

The PBO is a fiscal council. Fiscal councils, also known as Independent Fiscal Institutions, have been established by a rapidly growing number of countries.¹⁷ A useful definition is that provided by the International Monetary Fund (IMF):

Fiscal councils are independent public institutions aimed at promoting sustainable public finances through various functions, including public assessments of fiscal plans and performance, and the evaluation or provision of macroeconomic and budgetary forecasts. By fostering transparency and promoting a culture of stability, they can raise reputational and electoral costs of undesirable policies and broken commitments.¹⁸

The IMF has suggested that fiscal councils promote fiscal discipline when they possess certain characteristics:

[F]iscal councils can promote stronger fiscal discipline as long as they are well-designed. The analysis points to a number of key features of effective fiscal councils: a strict operational independence from politics, the provision or public assessment of budgetary forecasts, a strong presence in the public debate (notably through an effective communication strategy), and an

explicit role in monitoring fiscal policy rules.¹⁹

The PBO possesses three of these key features. The PBO has a strict operational independence from politics. The PBO also provides and publicly assesses budget forecasts and has a strong presence in public and parliamentary debate. However, it does not have any explicit role in monitoring fiscal policy rules, because Canada has not yet set any.

Characteristics of Effective Councils	Canadian PBO
Strict operational independence	✓
Public assessment of forecasts	✓
Strong presence in public debate	✓
Monitors fiscal policy rules	✗

In assessing the effectiveness of fiscal councils, the IMF considered three performance indicators:

- 1) Fiscal performance (as measured by primary balance, which describes a situation in which a country's revenues equal its spending, but not its interest payments on accumulated deficits). Comparing across countries, "significantly higher primary balances are associated with fiscal councils featuring certain characteristics [those considered above]."²⁰
- 2) Media impact (as measured by quotes in the media). "[A] high media presence of the council tends to be associated with

¹⁷ Curristine, *supra* note 4 at 4.

¹⁸ *Ibid* at 1.

¹⁹ *Ibid* at 1.

²⁰ *Ibid* at 42

stronger fiscal performance.”²¹ This suggests the public scrutiny brought to bear on the budget by fiscal councils promotes stronger fiscal performance.

- 3) Quality of budgetary forecasts (in terms of bias and precision). “[C]ountries with fiscal councils tend to have more accurate and less optimistic macroeconomic and budgetary forecasts [across] the primary balance, cyclically-adjusted primary balance, and real GDP growth.”²² In other words, fiscal councils may significantly reduce the bias and increase the accuracy of government’s fiscal forecasts.

An article by Senior Economist Robert Hagemann published in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD) *Journal for Economic Studies* came to the same conclusion: fiscal councils contribute to better fiscal outcomes. Hagemann argues that fiscal councils may contribute by “limiting political influence over technical aspects of fiscal policy formulation (from either a positive or normative perspective) or monitoring.”²³

While most government estimates (including Canada’s) have a statistically significant long-term bias towards optimism or pessimism, fiscal council estimates do not.²⁴ They thus contribute to more accurate forecasts, assumptions and projections of key variables for budget decisions. On the costing side, “fiscal councils tasked with a mandate to

undertake positive economic analysis play an indirect but potentially effective role in limiting politically motivated deficit bias by improving transparency and helping to highlight the true cost of fiscal decisions.”²⁵

This literature supports a theoretical link between the PBO’s activities and its broader objectives, particularly stronger fiscal discipline and outcomes. It suggests that this link could be strengthened by the adoption of fiscal rules against which the PBO could monitor compliance.

2.2. Sample of Key Publications

In September 2013, the PBO published the annual Fiscal Sustainability Report. This report assesses the long-term consequences of demographic pressures on the Canadian economy and the public finances of the federal government, subnational governments, and the Canada and Quebec pension plans. The report found that while the federal government has fiscal room to meet the challenges of an ageing population, subnational governments must make significant policy changes to put public debt on a sustainable path.

In October 2013, the PBO released a report of federal public service wage growth.²⁶ The report showed that there had been little growth from changes in classification or real wage growth, and that rising labour costs were instead driven by increased levels of employment and inflation. This finding was used by the opposition, media, and

²¹ *Ibid* at 45

²² *Ibid* at 47-8.

²³ Robert Hagemann, “How Can Fiscal Councils Strengthen Fiscal Performance?” (2011) 1 *OECD J Economic Studies*, online: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eco_studies-2011-5kg2d3gx4d5c> at 81.

²⁴ *Ibid*.

²⁵ *Ibid*.

²⁶ Duncan MacDonald, “Federal Public Service Wage Growth 2001-02 to 2011-12” (9 October 2013), online: PBO website <http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/files/files/Federal_Public_Service_Wage_EN.pdf>.

unions to challenge the government's rationale for the *Expenditure Restraint Act*.²⁷

Also in the fall, the PBO released its annual Economic and Fiscal Outlook Update, as well as a revised set of projections following the government's fall update and the release of fiscal year-end results. In its update projections, PBO forecasted significantly higher surpluses than Budget 2014 projections and identified for the first time that the government's policy freeze on Employment Insurance premium rates would keep rates higher than necessary in 2015 and 2016, contributing to the budget surplus.

In November 2013, the PBO published an analysis requested by the Member of Parliament for Charlottetown, Mr. Sean Casey, for an analysis of the fiscal impact of the spending plan for the Last Post Fund announced as part of Budget 2013.²⁸ The PBO found that because the eligibility criteria for the program were so restrictive, the agency was expected to spend less than a third of the funding it was allocated. This rallied political support behind the demands of the Royal Canadian Legion that modern-day veterans be declared eligible. It is worth noting that this change to the eligibility criteria was implemented in February 2014.²⁹

In February 2014, the PBO published an analysis of absenteeism in the public service which had been

requested by the Member of Parliament for Ottawa Centre, Mr. Paul Dewar.³⁰ This analysis was requested to understand and review claims by the President of the Treasury Board that sick leave reform was necessary. The PBO's report found that public servants took an average of 11.5 days off of paid sick leave per year, and that the 18.2 day figure cited by Minister Clement included unpaid sick leave. It also found that there was substantial variance in use of sick leave by department which made averages somewhat misleading. Following this report, the leader of the Official Opposition asked the Treasury Board President to table the exact figures and to apologize for having wrongfully accused public servants of malingering.³¹ The parliamentary and public debate that was generated by the report provided better information upon which negotiations with the public service unions could be undertaken.³²

In March 2014, the PBO published its second Labour Market Assessment. Employment is a contributor to Canada's prosperity and is of profound importance to Canadians. As the PBO's first foray into this field, the production of the report required building new relationships and discovering new data sources that will form the groundwork for annual updates. This report proved controversial as it found no evidence to support

²⁷ The Canadian Press, "Federal workers' real wages flat over last decade: PBO" (9 October 2013), online: CBC website <<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/federal-workers-real-wages-flat-over-last-decade-pbo-1.1931628>>.

²⁸ Trevor Shaw, "Fiscal Analysis of Veterans' Funeral and Burial Benefits" (4 November 2013), online: PBO website <http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/files/files/Last%20Post%20Fund%20-%20Fiscal%20Analysis_EN.pdf>.

²⁹ Last Post Fund, "News and Events: Expanding the Funeral and Burial Program for Modern-Day Veterans" (11 February 2013), online: PBO website <<http://www.lastpostfund.ca/EN/newsdetails.php>>.

³⁰ Erin Barkel, "Fiscal Analysis of Sick Leave in the Federal Public Service" (6 Feb 2014), online: PBO website <<http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/files/files/Sick%20Leave%20EN.pdf>>.

³¹ See House of Commons Debates, 41st Parl, 2nd Sess, No 43 (6 February 2014) at 2:30 PM, online: HoC website <http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?DocId=6412197&Language=E&Mode=1> and associated statements to media.

³² Alex Boutilier, The Star, "Public servants take similar amount of sick days as private sector: Report" (6 February 2014), online: the Star website: <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2014/02/06/public_servants_take_similar_amount_of_sick_days_as_private_sector_report.html>

the government's assertions that there is a labour shortage that would justify the Temporary Foreign Workers Program. This sparked broad debate in the media and Parliament that influenced the overhaul of the Temporary Foreign Workers Program announced in June 2014.³³

The PBO also published its quarterly supplementary estimates and annual analysis of the main estimates. These PBO analyses are important for parliamentarians and the media because they provide a credible distillation of the estimates into digestible messages. It also gives parliamentarians a point of entry for understanding the estimates and confidence that the spending they are being asked to approve does not contain any surprises.

2.3. Performance Indicators

2.3.1. Improved parliamentary and public understanding and dialogue

Parliamentary debate

In the 2013-14 FY, the PBO was mentioned 185 times in Hansard. While lower than the prior fiscal year, this is still an extraordinary level of attention, indicating that the PBO plays an important role in public and parliamentary debate.

Fiscal Year	Hansard Mentions ³⁴
2009-10 FY	139
2010-11 FY	218
2011-12 FY	120
2012-13 FY	541 ³⁵
2013-14 FY	185

In the 2013-14 FY, the former and interim Parliamentary Budget Officers were each invited once, and the new PBO invited twice, to appear before the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance and the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance to speak about the PBO's work.³⁶ This is similar to the number of requests typically received under a majority government: the PBO was asked to appear three times in the 2012-13 FY and twice in the 2011-12 FY. Before 2011, when there was a minority government, the PBO was asked to appear nine times in 2010-11 FY, three times in 2009-10, and five times in 2008-09.

As a point of reference, the PBO's 185 mentions suggest an impact on parliamentary debate comparable to other sources of fiscal analysis,

³⁴ Based on the Library of Parliament's Prismweb search, which include House of Commons, Senate, and Committee proceedings for the relevant time period.

³⁵ This exceptional figure is primarily due to the consideration of a Bill C-476, *An Act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act (Parliamentary Budget Officer)*, which would have amended the mandate of the PBO

³⁶ House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance, *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence* 41st Parl, 1st Sess, No 118 (30 April 2013) at 11:03:56 AM; House of Commons, Standing Committee on Finance, *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence* 41st Parl, 2nd Sess, No 2 (29 October 2013) at 1:05 PM; House of Commons, Standing Committee on Finance, *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence* 41st Parl, 2nd Sess, No 3 (5 November 2013) at 1:05 PM; Senate, Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, *Proceedings of the Standing Committee on National Finance Issue 4 Evidence*, 41st Parl, 1st Sess, (28 January 2014) .

³³ Employment and Social Development Canada, "Better and More Labour Market Information" (23 June 2014), online: ESDC website <<http://actionplan.gc.ca/en/initiative/temporary-foreign-worker-program>>.

agents of Parliament and similar institutions, despite its small size and limited legal powers.

Organization	Hansard Mentions
Parliamentary Budget Office	185
Department of Finance	186
Bank of Canada	224
Privacy Commissioner	201
Information Commissioner	104
Auditor General of Canada	1,025
Official Languages Commissioner	16

A review of Hansard suggests the PBO is playing its intended role in parliamentary debate: it is being cited as an authority by all parties in relation to budgetary matters. This demonstrates that, despite its limited resources, the PBO's analysis is authoritative, non-partisan and relevant.

Box 2-1: Examples of the citation of the PBO as an authority in Parliamentary Debate

Mr. Jack Harris (NDP): Mr. Speaker, **the Parliamentary Budget Officer already showed that budgets set aside for the joint support ships were insufficient**, yet the Conservatives have been silent on this procurement mismanagement. Given that not enough money has been set aside, will the Conservatives be putting more money into the program, or will they be scaling back the ship's capabilities, or will it be the number of ships?³⁷

Ms. Joyce Murray (Liberal): I want to remind the House that the acquisition of F-35 joint strike fighters was restarted after reports by the Auditor General and **the Parliamentary Budget Officer confirmed that the government knowingly misled Canadians on the**

³⁷ House of Commons Debates, 41st Parl, 2nd Sess, No 18 (18 November 2013) at 2:40 PM, online: <<http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?DocId=6303814>>.

program's cost. It was, in fact, keeping two sets of books. In 2010 the Prime Minister claimed the cost would be \$9 billion for 65 fighters, but by 2012 the full cost was pegged at more than \$46 billion.³⁸

Mr. David Anderson (Conservative): Our government has been very clear that we are not going to raise taxes on Canadians to balance that budget and **the new Parliamentary Budget Officer has confirmed our economic action plan will see Canada return to surplus before the next election.**³⁹

Public debate

As per OECD's guidelines, independent fiscal councils play a role in informing the public on behalf of Parliamentarians. The PBO's substantial contribution to public debate is demonstrated by the frequency with which it is cited by the media, the profile of those mentions and how those mentions treat the PBO.

Fiscal Year	Media Mentions ⁴⁰
2009-10 FY	906
2010-11 FY	1,302
2011-12 FY	1,183
2012-13 FY	1,875
2013-14 FY	1,142

³⁸ House of Commons Debates, 41st Parl, 2nd Sess, No 10 (29 October 2013) at 11:25 AM, online: <<http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?DocId=6274539>>.

³⁹ House of Commons Debates, 41st Parl, 2nd Sess, No 10 (29 October 2013) at 11:40 AM, online: <<http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?DocId=6274539>>.

⁴⁰ Hits on Canadian Newsstand Complete, which covers nearly 300 Canadian media sources, for ("parliamentary budget" AND (Officer OR Office OR Watchdog)) OR (directeur parlementaire du budget), plus hits on Eureka for "directeur parlementaire du budget" excluding la Presse Canadienne which is already in Canadian Newsstand Complete. This does not include all Canadian newspapers.

In the 2013-14 FY, the PBO was cited 1,142 times in the media. While lower than the prior fiscal year, this is still an extraordinary level of attention, indicating the PBO played a substantial role in public debate.

The PBO is a public institution with a legislative mandate, which distinguishes it from other organizations, such as public think tanks. That said, the PBO's 1,142 mentions represent a greater impact on public debate than any private sector think tank except the Fraser Institute. This figure represents more than double the impact on public debate per dollar invested of any major private think-tank.

Organization	Media Mentions ⁴¹	Budget ⁴²
Parliamentary Budget Office	1,142	\$2.8 m
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives	720	\$5.3 m
Institute for Research on Public Policy	313	\$3.6 m
Fraser Institute	1,678	\$10.2 m
C.D. Howe Institute	607	\$4.9 m

Of the 1,142 mentions, 778 were newspaper articles, 240 were wire feeds, and 30 were television shows or radio programs. The latter represents a decline in the PBO's TV presence compared with the prior fiscal year.

⁴¹ Hits on Canadian Newsstand Complete for the English name of the think tank, plus hits on Eureka for the French name of the think tank. There may be some double counting between these results for think tanks.

⁴² Obtained from Canada Revenue Agency charity listings.

The PBO was most frequently cited in The Canadian Press (119 mentions), the national news agency, and its French counterpart, La Presse Canadienne (81), both of which distribute news articles to their member news organizations across the country.

The PBO was also frequently mentioned by mainstream newspapers with broad circulations, including The Ottawa Citizen (77 articles), the National Post (55 articles), the Toronto Star (48 articles) and The Globe and Mail (47 articles). The Globe and Mail and Toronto Star have circulations of over 300,000, while the Ottawa Citizen and National Post have circulations over 100,000.

The PBO was discussed just as extensively in mainstream French newspapers with broad circulations, including Le Devoir (61 articles), le Droit (49), la Presse (23), and Le Soleil (15).⁴³ The PBO was mentioned on three television and radio programs included in the Canadian Newsstand Complete database: The National (9), Le Téléjournal (7) and The House (3). All these sources are monitored by political staff and public servants who would in turn report them in media summaries for senior management and parliamentarians.

Newspaper	PBO Mentions	Circulation ⁴⁴
Ottawa Citizen	77	111,408
National Post	55	163,063
Toronto Star	48	350,222
Globe and Mail	47	346,485
La Presse	23	241,659

⁴³ The databases used did not include Le Journal de Montreal, Journal Metro, or Le Journal de Quebec.

⁴⁴ As reported by Newspapers Canada for 2013.

Le Soleil	15	75,730
Le Droit	56	35,158
Le Devoir	61	31,902

Many mentions of the PBO were prominent: 102 of the 645 newspaper articles appeared on the front page of the paper (page 1) or a section of the paper (e.g. page B1).

Many of these front page articles were in major papers, including the Ottawa Citizen (24 articles), National Post (7), Globe and Mail (4), Toronto Star (4), and Le Devoir (3).

The PBO received almost universal support from the media: 99 out of the 102 front page articles were supportive of the PBO, including 40 which cited it as an authority, 18 which criticized the government for refusing to give the PBO data, 18 which repeated the results of PBO analysis in a supportive manner, 16 which mentioned the PBO as a desirable example, two which reported on new evidence confirming the results of PBO analysis, two which mentioned the PBO's opinion as relevant, two which mentioned upcoming PBO analysis as potentially relevant, and one which criticized the government's appointment as failing to do the office justice. The remaining three articles were neutral.⁴⁵ None of the front page articles were critical of the PBO; not a single article doubted the PBO's conclusions, criticised it for exceeding its mandate, mentioned it as an example to be avoided, or found evidence that contradicted its results.

⁴⁵ One article managed to describe in a completely neutral fashion a conflict between the PBO and the government, and the other two mentioned the former PBO outside of the context of the PBO's work

The PBO's work was the primary focus of 31 of these front page articles and secondary in 70 articles. While articles with the PBO as a primary focus give a higher profile to its work, the secondary mentions are also important because they indicate that the PBO's results have permeated public debate on the subject matter of its reports.

Box 2-2: Examples of front page newspaper articles on the PBO

Study debunks labour shortage in Canada; U of Lethbridge report backs up earlier research

A second study in less than a week has concluded that there is no labour shortage in Canada, nor is one expected to arrive in the next few decades.

A study published Friday by a University of Lethbridge professor echoes results of a report by the federal government's Parliamentary Budget Office released Tuesday - both conclude there are more than enough workers on a national basis in Canada to fill available jobs. [...]

Source: Healing, D. (2014, Mar 29). Study debunks labour shortage in Canada; U of Lethbridge report backs up earlier research. Calgary Herald. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1511369391>

Coding: Secondary, reported on new evidence confirming the results of PBO analysis

How Kijiji's job listings drove Ottawa's skills-shortage claims

Economists have been scratching their heads for weeks as to how the Conservative government could claim on budget day that Canada's job vacancy rate was on the rise when Statistics Canada said it was declining.

The answer, it appears, is that Finance Canada's numbers were thrown off by data from a surprising place: questionable job postings on Kijiji, a popular classified site used by Canadians to buy and sell everything from rarely used exercise bikes to old electronics.

Officials with the Parliamentary Budget Office say Kijiji is so unreliable as a job site that it can single-handedly explain away the government's claims. [...]

Source: Curry, B., & Grant, T. (2014, Mar 26). How Kijiji's job listings drove Ottawa's skills-shortage claims. The Globe and Mail Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1510048372>

Coding: Primary, supportive repetition

On average, media references to the subject matter of PBO reports soared in the month following the publication of a PBO report, suggesting that the PBO's analysis generates a great deal of broader discussion. As in past years, the PBO's military procurement reports generated the most discussion, which is not surprising given the costs associated with major procurement projects.

Report Topic	Media Mentions ⁴⁶		
	Prior month	Next month	Increase ⁴⁷
Federal Infrastructure	942 ⁴⁸	545	-42%
Adult Fitness Tax Credit	5	4	-20%
Federal Public Service Wage Growth	23	31	35%
Veterans Funeral and Burial Benefits	2	12	500%
Joint Support Ships	5	160	3,100%
Sick Leave in the Federal Public Ser.	15	46	207%

The broad impact of the PBO is reflected in its website activity, which remained busy (although less so than the prior year), particularly with visitors from the House of Commons network and the broader Ottawa-Gatineau area.

⁴⁶ Search results for full term in Canadian Newsstand Complete

⁴⁷ Calculated as (prior/subsequent) – 1

⁴⁸ A federal budget was released announcing major federal infrastructure spending.

Time Period ⁴⁹	Website Sessions	Visits from HoC Network ⁵⁰	Visits from Ottawa-Gatineau
2012/09/1 to 2013/07/15	37,192	5,026	17,220
2013/09/1 to 2014/07/15	25,689	3,268	13,097

The PBO launched its social media presence on March 15, 2014, near the end of the fiscal year. Within 10 days, there were 272 followers on Twitter. In contrast, the Office of the Information Commissioner has 703 followers, the Office of the Auditor General, 1,108 and the Office of the Privacy Commissioner, 7,787.⁵¹ However, the PBO's social media presence has continued to grow.

Date	Twitter followers ⁵²
March 15, 2014	0 (Launch)
March 25, 2014	272
October 14, 2014	680

2.3.2. Improved budget transparency and understanding

The PBO makes a direct contribution to budget transparency and understanding through its published reports. In the 2013-14 FY, the Office published 25 reports. It is worth noting that this

⁴⁹ The parliamentary year, rather than the fiscal year is used because two complete fiscal years of data were not available.

⁵⁰ Unfortunately, this includes the Library of Parliament, which includes the PBO itself, so this is not an accurate gauge of parliamentary interest.

⁵¹ As of 19 August 2014.

⁵² Total for French and English feeds.

list, as opposed to that of previous years, doesn't include opening remarks or some official letters.

Fiscal Year	Publications
2009-10 FY	25
2010-11 FY	38
2011-12 FY	37
2012-13 FY	47
2013-14 FY	25

Most reports (20 out of 25) focused on the state of the nation's finance (12 reports), the government's estimates (7), or trends in the national finances (1). Four more related to the costing of government bills and programs, and one to the costing of a private member's bill.

Publications by Program Activity	Frequency
State of the Nation's Finances	12
Trends in the National Economy	1
Undertake research into government estimates	7
Costing of Government Bills and Programs	4
Costing of Private Members' Bills	1

Publications by Type	Frequency
Estimates Analysis	4
Budget Analysis	1
Economic and Fiscal Outlook	7
Expenditure Monitor	3
Fiscal Sustainability Report	1
Labour Market Assessment	1
Proposal Cost Estimates	5
Other Fiscal Analysis	3

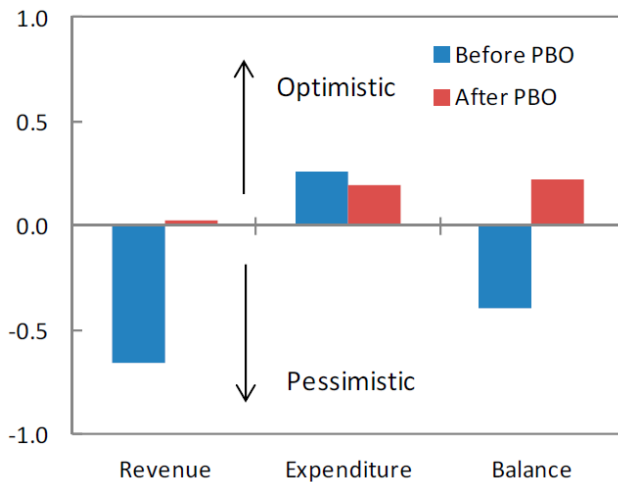
Requested reports included analysis of public service wage growth, analysis of public service absenteeism and tools for estimating the revenue impact of tax changes. The nature of these reports, as responses to questions and concerns raised by parliamentarians and committees, substantially increases their value in providing insight into the federal budget.

The production of such a breadth of publications on matters included in the federal budget contributes to the transparency and understandability of the federal budget.

The PBO, unlike the Department of Finance, performs its own economic and fiscal forecast. This work is performed by four full-time analysts. The PBO's forecasts are never absolutely accurate; this is the nature of forecasting and a challenge that the Department of Finance faces as well. This fact is entirely consistent with the impetus for creating the PBO, which was to improve understanding of economic and fiscal prospects by providing a second, credible perspective. A study by the International Monetary Fund has concluded that the evidence that is available suggests that the PBO has prompted the Department of Finance to improve its forecasting methodologies.⁵³

⁵³ Curristine, *supra* note 4 at 19.

Figure 2-1 IMF Calculations of the Canadian Government's fiscal forecast errors 2000-10 (% of GDP) showing impact of PBO



Source: International Monetary Fund, *The Functions and Impact of Fiscal Councils* (16 July 2013), online: IMF website <<https://www.imf.org/external/np/pp/eng/2013/071613.pdf>>, at 63.

The PBO provides analysis into specialized areas such as the labour market and long-term fiscal sustainability.

2.3.3. Improved budget practices

Improvement budget practices are a longer-term outcome that defies systematic quantitative measurement. However, anecdotal evidence suggests the PBO is having a positive influence on public service budgeting practices. Furthermore, the PBO's reports provide a defensible methodology by which departments can estimate the cost of proposals within their jurisdiction.

For example, following the PBO's criticisms, the Department of National Defence purchased the TruePlanning software used by the PBO in 2013,

which is the gold standard for military procurement costing.⁵⁴ It also established the National Fighter Procurement Secretariat to provide a more open and transparent acquisition process.⁵⁵ Likewise, the PBO's criticism during 2013 of the employment data supporting the Temporary Foreign Worker Program led to the Government committing to collecting better data to support the program.⁵⁶

On the forecasting side, according to the IMF report released in 2013, the presence of an independent fiscal council causes finance ministries to revise their methodologies such that revenue, expenditure, and budget balance become more accurate and less biased.⁵⁷

The PBO's first long term sustainability report in 2010 contributed to the government producing its own fiscal sustainability report in 2012.⁵⁸ That report was updated in 2013.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ National Defence and the Canadian Forces, "Detail Report - W7714-145956/001/XL" (2013) Q4 Proactive Disclosure of Contracts over \$10,000, online:

<<http://www.admfincs.forces.gc.ca/apps/dc/contract-contrat-eng.asp?q=4&y=2013&id=id149432>>; Public Works and Government Services Canada, "ADP Software (W7714-145956/001/XL)" (2014) *Buyandsell.ca Procurement Data*, online: Buyandsell.ca <<https://buyandsell.gc.ca/procurement-data/award-notice/PW-XL-119-27369-001>>

⁵⁵ Public Works and Government Services Canada, *National Fighter Procurement Secretariat (NFPS) Frequently Asked Questions*, online: PWGSC website <<http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/app-acq/stampg-lamsmp/snacfaq-nfpsfaq-eng.html>>.

⁵⁶ Employment and Social Development Canada, *Better and More Labour Market Information* (23 June 2014), online: ESDC website http://www.esdc.gc.ca/eng/jobs/foreign_workers/reform/improve.shtml.

⁵⁷ Curristine, *supra* note 4 at 15.

⁵⁸ *Ibid* at 17.

⁵⁹ Department of Finance, *Update Economic and Fiscal Projections – 2013: Part 4 of 4*, online: DoF website <<http://www.fin.gc.ca/efp-pef/2013/efp-pef-anx-eng.asp>>.

2.4. Inputs

Three inputs are essential for the Parliamentary Budget Office to continue to perform its legislative mandate:

- 1) access to government data to perform analysis; and
- 2) sufficient funding to continue to conduct such analysis or expand its services in line with new parliamentary needs or technology;
- 3) requests from parliamentarians and committees for analysis that complements the PBO's self-initiated work.

2.4.1. Data access

Where possible, the PBO relies on publicly available data and models or those it can purchase from private sources. For example, the PBO's cost estimates for the two Joint Support Ships were based on PRICE Systems' TruePlanning® software package, which experts identified as "widely recognized and highly respected around the world as a robust military cost estimating tool."⁶⁰ This model was run using a combination of publicly available and confidential data. Such models, and the training required to use them properly, are expensive.

Because the PBO is frequently asked to provide cost analysis of particular programs or proposals over which government has exclusive control of information, the Office has been provided with a statutory power to access certain information.

Under the *Parliament of Canada Act*, "the Parliamentary Budget Officer is entitled, by request made to the deputy head of a department [...] to free and timely access to any financial or economic data in the possession of the department that are required for the performance of his or her mandate."⁶¹

Exceptions are carved out for private data to which access is restricted under the *Access to Information Act* and information contained within Cabinet confidences.⁶²

In the 2013-14 FY, the PBO submitted 150 requests for data, substantially more than the prior year. This was done partially as a response to the decision in *Page v Mulcair* (see Box 2-2) and, accordingly, was largely due to Information Request No. 113 (IR 113), which related to the impact of expenditure restraint across government and thus had to be distributed to 81 departments.

Of the 150 requests, departments provided the information sought in 82, or 55 per cent of cases, almost double the total of 42 met in the previous year.

⁶¹ *Parliament of Canada Act*, *supra* note 5 at 79.3(1) ("Except as provided by any other Act of Parliament that expressly refers to this subsection, the Parliamentary Budget Officer is entitled, by request made to the deputy head of a department within the meaning of any of paragraphs (a), (a.1) and (d) of the definition "department" in section 2 of the *Financial Administration Act*, or to any other person designated by that deputy head for the purpose of this section, to free and timely access to any financial or economic data in the possession of the department that are required for the performance of his or her mandate").

⁶² *Ibid*, at 79.3(2) ("(2) Subsection (1) does not apply in respect of any financial or economic data (a) that are information the disclosure of which is restricted under section 19 of the *Access to Information Act* or any provision set out in Schedule II to that Act; or (b) that are contained in a confidence of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada described in subsection 69(1) of that Act, unless the data are also contained in any other record, within the meaning of section 3 of that Act, and are not information referred to in paragraph (a).").

⁶⁰ Barkel and Yalkin, *supra* note 10 at 4.

Fiscal Year	Info. Requests	Complete Responses	Compliance Rate
2009-10	20	10	50%
2010-11	27	21	78%
2011-12	52	41	79%
2012-13	116	42	36%
2013-14	150	82	55%

Four refusals were based on assertions that the data were not available; one was based on Cabinet confidence, and another on prohibitions on disclosure under the *Income Tax Act*. Five requests received no response or partial responses without any rationale for not providing the information requested. The PBO continues to work with departments to better identify and understand their legal obligations. Although this process is imperfect and many responses non-satisfactory, the record number of requests completed in the 2013-14 FY is a testament to the success of this approach.

The vast majority of refusals, 57 out of 68, were related to IR 113; many of the 81 departments that received the request never replied to it, or refused to disclose the requested information. The Privy

Council Office eventually responded on behalf of those departments by alleging that the request was outside the PBO's mandate.

Accordingly, the PBO filed a number of requests under the *Access to Information Act*, on a trial basis, throughout the 2013-14 FY, yielding mixed results.

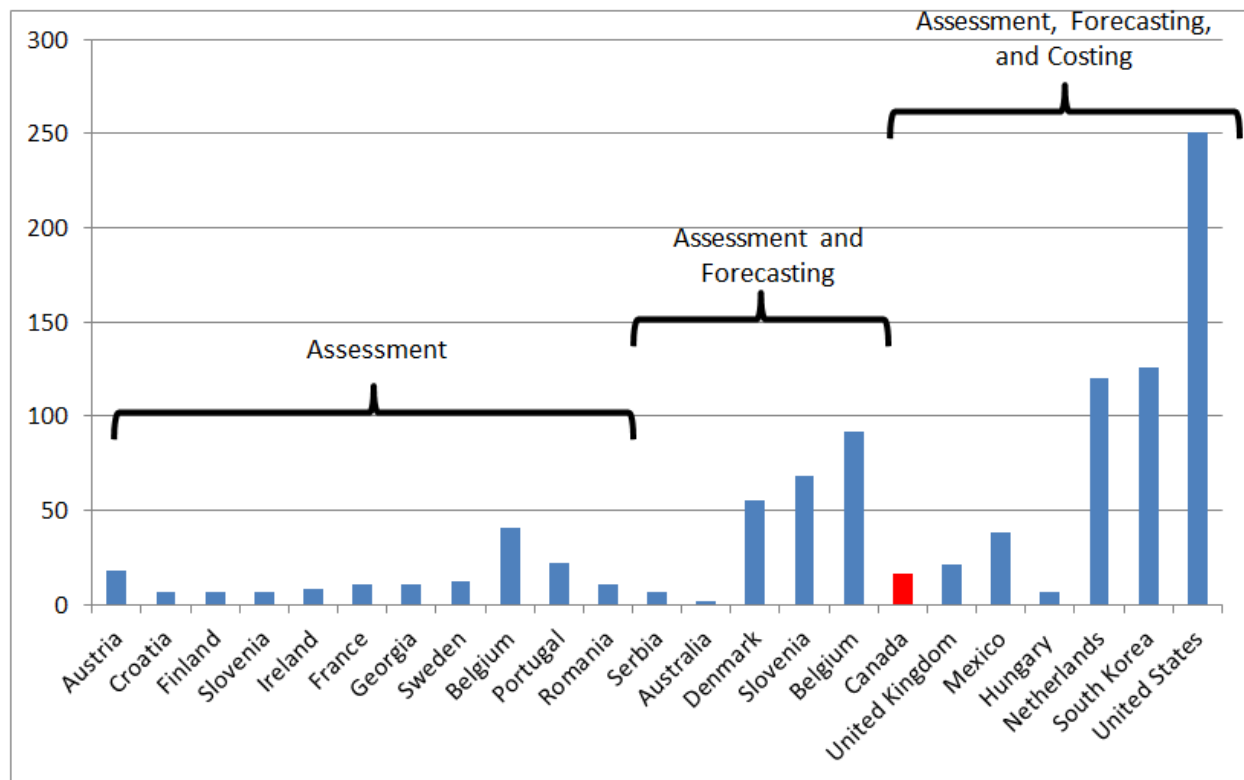
Box 2-3: Historical background on *Page v Mulcair*

A number of requests were made on the heels of the decision of the Federal Court in *Page v Mulcair*, which was released at the start of the 2013-14 FY. The then PBO had asked a reference question of the Federal Court to clarify whether the PBO had jurisdiction to analyze, pursuant to a request by the Leader of the Official Opposition Thomas Mulcair, the achievability of the fiscal savings outlined in the Government's 2012 Budget. The second issue was whether the PBO has the authority to request related information from departments on the savings related to staffing reductions.⁶³

The Federal Court found that the issue was non-justiciable. That is to say, it could not yet be answered by a court because the departments had not yet declined to provide the necessary information. So, there was no issue to be decided.⁶⁴ This aspect of the decision led the PBO to formalize its information requests so it was clear when a request was submitted and whether the requested information was provided.

⁶³ *Page v Mulcair*, *supra* note 6 at para 3.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, at para 5 ("Mr. Page has never actually requested data from any department at the instance of Mr. Mulcair. It follows that no refusal to provide data is contained in the record before me. Therefore, the questions are hypothetical and I decline to answer them on the grounds of non-justiciability").

Figure 2-2 International Monetary Fund estimates of fiscal council FTE staff, grouped by function

2.4.2. Funding

The PBO was within its 2013-14 FY budget, spending \$2,042,141 of \$2,557,800. Its budget comes out of that of the Library of Parliament.

	Original Budget	Final Budget*	Actual Expend.
Total - Salary	\$1,824,800	\$1,635,856	\$1,577,300
Total Goods & Services	\$733,000	\$693,000	\$464,840
Total	\$2,557,800	\$2,328,856	\$2,042,141

*Throughout the FY PBO released funds back into LOP global budget because planned expenditures were less than the budgeted level.

Although the PBO's funding has not been increased since 2008, the coming years may offer an

opportunity to review the base budget. For instance, with more MPs added to the House of Commons to reflect population increases in addition to regular inflation, parliamentarians may wish to consider whether the current level of funding should be increased proportionately and, perhaps, tied to inflation.

The IMF has also noted that financial starvation could, in some circumstances, be used to curtail the operations of fiscal councils. In that context, it is worth noting that the direct program expenses (DPE) was the target of successive rounds of spending cuts in recent years. Should this trend continue, cutting the PBO's already meagre budget would pose a risk to its ongoing efficacy.

Compared internationally, Canada's PBO is small given the scope of its mandate; it has the smallest staff of any independent fiscal council in the world with responsibility for costing policy proposals.⁶⁵

The IMF recommends a minimum staff of 20 professionals for the forecasting and assessment functions alone, and more for the program costing function.⁶⁶ The PBO performs both these functions at less than half this recommended staffing level.

Furthermore, the IMF has made the following observations about attacks on the independence of fiscal councils:

In case of conflicts between the government (and the legislature) and the fiscal council, politicians have not hesitated to curtail independence. This has been done by cutting the council's resources, controlling its work program, delaying appointments of members, or changing its size and mandate altogether. The most egregious example is the Hungarian fiscal council, which in its second year of existence, had its mandate restricted and staff virtually eliminated. The Belgium HCF made recommendations which were at odds with government's objectives and experienced a two year delay in the appointment of key members. Canada and Sweden also faced threats to their budget after being critical of government policies.⁶⁷

The PBO has experienced three of these four strategies, but remains independent, continuing to

publish reports with regard only to quality, not political consequences.⁶⁸

While histories, mandates and workloads of officers of Parliament vary considerably, it is worth noting that the PBO's budget is one-fifth of that of the Information Commissioner, one-tenth that of the Privacy Commissioner or Commissioner of Official Languages, and less than 3 per cent of the budget of the Auditor General.

Officer of Parliament	Budget for 2013-14 FY
Parliamentary Budget Office	\$2.6 m
Auditor General	\$97.7 m ⁶⁹
Information Commissioner	\$15.0 m ⁷⁰
Privacy Commissioner	\$29.9 m ⁷¹
Commissioner of Official Language	\$24.3 m ⁷²

The Canadian PBO receives about a third the funding of its Australian counterpart and about 6 per cent of the funding of the US Congressional Budget Office it was modeled after.

⁶⁵ As a result of institutional changes, Hungary's independent fiscal council can no longer be considered independent.

⁶⁶ *Ibid* at 35-36.

⁶⁷ International Monetary Fund, *The Functions and Impact of Fiscal Councils* (16 July 2013), online: IMF website <<https://www.imf.org/external/np/pp/eng/2013/071613.pdf>> at 34-5.

⁶⁸ The PBO suffered attempts to cut its funding (2009), delay of appointments (2013), and attempts to control its work program by determining on its behalf what is within its mandate (2012).

⁶⁹ Forecasted Spending. Office of the Auditor General of Canada, *2014-15 Report on Plans and Priorities* at Exhibit 4, online: <http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/acc_rpt_e_39082.html>.

⁷⁰ Forecasted Spending. Office of the Information Commissioner, *2014-15 Report on Plans and Priorities* at 17, online: <<http://www.oic-ci.gc.ca/eng/rpp-2014-2015.aspx>>.

⁷¹ Forecasted Spending. Office of the Privacy Commissioner, *2014-15 Report on Plans and Priorities* at "Budgetary Planning Summary for Strategic Outcome(s) and Program(s) (dollars)", online: <https://www.priv.gc.ca/information/rpp/2014-2015/rpp_2014-15_e.asp>.

⁷² Forecasted Spending. Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, *2014-15 Report on Plans and Priorities* at "Budgetary Planning Summary for Strategic Outcome(s) and Program(s) (dollars)", online: <http://www.officiallanguages.gc.ca/en/transparence_transparency/2014-2015/report-plans-priorities-2014-2015>.

Budget Office	Budget for 2013-14 FY
Parliamentary Budget Office (Canada)	\$2.6 m
Parliamentary Budget Office (Australia)	\$7.7 m ⁷³
Congressional Budget Office (United States)	\$44 m ⁷⁴

The PBO's budget is less than 4 per cent of that of the Department of Finance's "Economic and Fiscal Policy Framework" Program, which performs a similar economic and fiscal advisory function to that performed by the PBO.⁷⁵

⁷³ Parliament of Australia, Parliamentary Budget Office, *Portfolio Budget Statements 2013-14* at 4, online: <http://www.aph.gov.au/~media/05%20About%20Parliament/54%20Parliamentary%20Depts/548%20Parliamentary%20Budget%20Office/PBS/2013-2014_PBO_PBS.pdf>.

⁷⁴ Congressional Budget Office, Testimony on CBO's Appropriation Request for FY 2013 at para 2, online: <<http://www.cbo.gov/publication/42990>>.

⁷⁵ According to the departments 2013-14 Report on Plans and Priorities "This program is the primary source of advice and recommendations to the Minister of Finance [...] related to the areas of economic, fiscal and social policy; federal-provincial relations; financial affairs; taxation; and international trade and finance. The work conducted by this program involves extensive research, analysis, and consultation and collaboration [...]. In addition, this program includes policy advice on the development of Memoranda to Cabinet, negotiation of agreements, drafting of legislation and sponsoring of bills through the parliamentary process, which are subsequently administered by other programs within the Department and by other government departments and agencies. The aim of this program is to create a sound and sustainable fiscal and economic framework that will generate sufficient revenues and provide for the management of expenditures in line with the Budget Plan and financial operations of the Government of Canada." This is vaguely comparable to the PBO's role in advising on economic forecasting, research into the state of the nation's finances, and the costs of proposals within federal jurisdiction.

Government Organization 2013-14 FY	Budget	FTEs ⁷⁶
Parliamentary Budget Office	\$2.6 m	17
Department of Finance Economic and Financial Advisory Function	\$73.4 m ⁷⁷	510

2.4.3. Requests

Some of the PBO's work is driven by parliamentary requests:

Impetus	Publications in 2013-14 FY
MP or Senator initiated	7
Committee initiated⁷⁸	7
Self-initiated regular products	11

These requests focus the PBO's work on matters of interest to Parliament and the public. They also lend the PBO legitimacy. Since 2008, the PBO has received requests from members of every party in both the Senate and House of Commons. In 2013-14, all parties but one have submitted requests.

In 2013⁷⁹, the PBO completed nine requests, just over its historical average of 8.2. It closed six requests, fewer than its historical average of 7.2.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Full Time Employees

⁷⁷ Planned Spending. Department of Finance, *Report on Plans and Priorities 2013-14* at Graphic 1 - Program: Economic and Fiscal Policy Framework, online: Department of Finance Website <http://www.fin.gc.ca/pub/rpp/2013-2014/rpp-1314-eng.asp#_Toc348441160>.

⁷⁸ Includes three published statements before the Standing Committee on Finance

⁷⁹ Unfortunately, this data was compiled by calendar rather than fiscal year.

⁸⁰ Historical averages calculated as the average for 2008 to 2012 based on the data shown in the accompanying table.

Year	Requests			
	Total Received	Ongoing*	Completed*	Closed
2008	9	0	4	5
2009	24	0	12	11
2010	26	0	14	8
2011	16	0	4	8
2012	14	1	7	4
2013	17	1	9	6
*Status as of August 5 th , 2014				

The reasons for which requests were closed (See Annex C) provide some indication of the resource limitations the PBO faces. The most common reasons the PBO cites for refusing requests are the analysis for which the data will be used does not fall within the PBO's mandate (10 to date), the prioritization of fiscally material analysis resulting from lack of resources (seven to date) and lack of data (two to date).

Each of these constraints also limits the scope and depth of the analysis that the PBO can provide in response to each request. In particular, lack of data severely constrains the matters on which the PBO can produce authoritative analysis.

Most other closed requests were withdrawn or abandoned.

The PBO addresses most requests within a year to ensure its analysis remains relevant and timely. In two cases, however, the PBO has kept the requests open because Government data are still needed to respond. Although the data exist and the PBO is legally entitled to the figures, Government departments refuse to provide them. The PBO's efforts to obtain the data in such cases are on-going.

The PBO conducts only limited informal outreach activities. It could likely solicit far more requests by proactively reaching out to parliamentarians, but it does not actually have the resources to handle more requests.

The next election is expected to increase the number of requests the PBO receives. The *Fair Representation Act* will add 30 more seats in Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec and, there will therefore be more MPs who may submit requests. It is worth noting that past experiences with majority and minority governments indicate that the PBO received more requests under a minority government.⁸¹

2.5. Independent Report on the Parliamentary Budget Office

The PBO did not commission an independent evaluation for the 2013-14 FY. It would like to do so in the future, ideally in the form of a peer review. An independent report on the PBO's work was featured in a case study by International Monetary Fund researchers released in 2013. As noted above, that study concluded that:

The PBO has earned a reputation for good quality independent analysis for its research, costing, and forecasting work. The strategy of being front and center on the fiscal policy issues of the day, combined with transparent reporting, and an active media approach, has proven successful in raising the media profile and the influence of the council. It has, however, also placed the council at the center of many high profile disputes with the

⁸¹ This is indicated by the drop in requests since 2011. It likely occurs because private members bills and parliamentary scrutiny in general get more attention when there is a minority government.

government resulting in the PBO turning to the courts for clarification on issues related to its institutional set up and independence.⁸²

2.6. Provincial Developments

The PBO is also beginning to serve as a model for supporting parliamentarians' ability to fulfill their budgetary responsibilities at the provincial level. In September 2013, Ontario's legislative assembly passed legislation establishing a Financial Accountability Officer (FAO).⁸³ The first FAO has not yet been appointed, but once in place, he or she will benefit from a statutory mandate and powers that reflects some of the lessons learned from the challenges faced by the PBO during the past few years.

Particularly important is the fact that the FAO will enjoy a broader right to access information than does the PBO. This will make it much harder for the FAO's work to be stymied by the type of refusals that have impeded the PBO's work. Private member's bills that would have created institutions akin to the PBO have also been debated in Alberta, British Columbia, Quebec and Saskatchewan in the past few years.⁸⁴

⁸² Teresa Currstine, Jason Harris, and Johann Seiwald, *Case Studies of Fiscal Councils – Functions and Impact* (16 July 2013), online: IMF Website

<<https://www.imf.org/external/np/pp/eng/2013/071613a.pdf>>, at 19.

⁸³ *Financial Accountability Officer Act*, SO 2013, c 4.

⁸⁴ Alberta Bill 202 "Independent Budget Officer Act", online:

<http://www.assembly.ab.ca/ISYS/LADDAR_files/docs/bills/bill/legisla_ture_28/session_2/20140303_bill-202.pdf>; British Columbia Bill M 201 "Independent Budget Officer Act, 2009" online:

<https://www.leg.bc.ca/39th1st/1st_read/m201-1.htm>;

Saskatchewan Bill No 629 "An Act to Appoint an Independent Budget Officer and to define the Duties, Functions and Powers of this Officer", online: <http://docs.legassembly.sk.ca/legdocs/Bills/4_26/Bill-629.pdf>; Quebec Bill 192 "Parliamentary Budget Officer Act", online: <<http://www.assnat.qc.ca/Media/Process.aspx?MediaId=ANQ.Vigie.BI>

3. Government Practices

3.1. Background

Parliament must approve the raising and spending of public money, but it may do so only if it has been recommended by the government.⁸⁵ This interdependence goes to the core of Canada's system of responsible government. To secure Parliament's approval of its fiscal recommendations, the government provides Parliament with budget data and information that justifies its requests. PBO staff relies on these data to prepare the research and analysis that parliamentarians rely on to decide whether to approve the government's recommendations. These data are an essential component of the PBO's work.

3.2. Overall Trends in Fiscal Reporting

As noted in many PBO reports published over the past year, the Government continues to increase the volume of budget-related data available to parliamentarians and the public. Most notably, there has been a significant increase in the level of detail provided in the Government's Reports on Plans and Priorities regarding federal programs. As well, the volume of in-year spending information continues to grow, with new detail furnished in departments' and agencies' Quarterly Financial Reports. The increasing timeliness and detail of budget information is of considerable benefit to the PBO, parliamentarians and the public in understanding:

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⁸⁵ *Constitution Act, 1867* (UK), 30 & 31 Vict, c 3, ss 53-54, reprinted in RSC 1985, Appendix II, No 5.

- *How much* the Government plans to spend
- *Why* it chooses to spend on specific programs (and cut others)
- *What it* anticipates that federal programs will achieve
- *Whether* the Government is on track to achieve its goals

The last point is particularly important given the lag of up to twenty months between the beginning of the fiscal year and the release of the audited Public Accounts and Departmental Performance Reports.

It is worth noting, however, that the provision of detailed information itself is not sufficient. Parliamentarians also need expert, independent interpretation, such as that provided by the PBO, to understand the data provided.

Moreover, the Government has refused to release the data required to prepare an independent projection of its direct program expenses (DPE)—the cost of government operations and smaller transfer programs, which represented nearly 43% of federal spending in 2012-13.

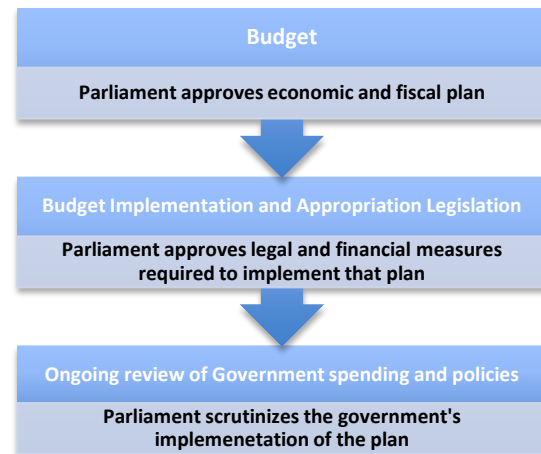
3.3. Issues in Fiscal Reporting

Notwithstanding progress made in the first five years of the PBO's mandate, there remain critical gaps in the budgeting data provided to Parliament. Many of these gaps could be filled by data that the Government currently possesses.

As outlined in Figure 3-1, the PBO is legislatively mandated to support three key aspects of Parliament's role in the financial cycle: considering and approving the Government's budget plan; debating and passing implementation and appropriation legislation; and reviewing the government's implementation of programs and policies that are funded by that legislation. In that context, assessing the data and information

required to help parliamentarians in their fiduciary roles remain a priority in the upcoming years.

Figure 3-1: Aspects of the Budget Process Supported by the PBO



3.3.1. Refusal to disclose details of Direct Program Expenses (DPE)

As DPE were the target of successive rounds of spending cuts in recent years, the refusal to disclose these data renders the PBO unable to provide Parliament with an assessment of whether the current restraint is sustainable over the long term.

As noted in the PBO's April Economic and Fiscal Outlook, such a prolonged period of suppressed DPE growth has never occurred in the history of the modern Public Accounts. Historically, a year of reductions is typically followed by a year of increases in DPE of around 6.4 per cent. As a result, DPE may face significant pressures following the 2014-15 cuts, as the most significant year-over-year reduction in DPE is set for 2014-15. Were the typical rebound from a period of DPE reductions to occur in 2014-15 or 2015-16, it would eliminate the projected surplus in 2015-16.

If the Government were to **disclose those data required to make projections of future direct program expenses in a timely fashion**, the PBO would be better able to perform analysis on behalf of parliamentarians.

3.3.2. Lack of concordance between the budget and the estimates

Since 2010, the Government no longer publishes a reconciliation of its Fiscal Plan—the Budget—and its Expenditure Plan—the Estimates. This makes it challenging for the PBO to assess whether the appropriation bills considered by Parliament are consistent with the fiscal plan that Parliament approved earlier in the year. Some parliamentarians have also noted that the lack of concordance between the Main Estimates and Budget hinders their ability to “connect the dots” and provide effective scrutiny of proposed spending.

In its June 2012 report, entitled *Strengthening Parliamentary Scrutiny of Estimates and Supply*, the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates recommended that the budget and estimates be reconciled. Reconciliation would allow parliamentarians to better understand the budgetary sources for new spending reflected in the estimates.⁸⁶ The PBO supports the committee’s recommendations.

The difficulty in reconciling the Budget and Estimates grew worse in 2014 following the Government’s decision to excise the Employment Insurance Account from the Estimates. While the Government correctly notes that from a legal and accounting perspective “The Employment

Insurance Operating Account is a separate account in the accounts of Canada”, the choice to exclude \$17.7 billion in projected spending from its Expenditure Plan makes it more challenging to reconcile these figures with the projection presented in Budget 2014.

If the Government were to **resume publishing a reconciliation of the Budget and Estimates, which includes the Employment Insurance Account**, the PBO would be better able to perform analysis on behalf of parliamentarians.

4. Looking Ahead

4.1. Strategic Priorities

For the period between 2013 and 2018, the PBO will pursue its five strategic priorities. They are designed more to reinvigorate the Office’s day-to-day work, than radically overhaul it. These priorities have one main objective: to ensure that the PBO continues to serve and support the Senate and House of Commons as parliamentarians exercise their authority to scrutinize and approve the use of public funds.

4.1.1. Expand the PBO’s current service offering by adding new, high-quality products and services tailored to the needs of parliamentarians

The Parliamentary Budget Office will continue to develop new high-quality products and services.

Its reports and analytical documents have a proven track record in terms of their importance to parliamentarians and their ability to raise the level of public debate. However, routine changes over time, as well as normal parliamentary developments, mean that the needs of parliamentarians change. Tailored products responsive to these evolving needs can have a profound impact on the ability of parliamentarians to carry out their roles.

⁸⁶ House of Commons Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, *Strengthening Parliamentary Scrutiny of Estimates and Supply* 21st Parl, 1 Sess (June 2012).

It is, therefore, incumbent on the PBO to consider how best to satisfy Parliament's requirements through new products and services. The creation of new products is also broadly consistent with the PBO's mandate to proactively analyze "the state of the nation's finances, the estimates of the government and trends in the national economy."⁸⁷

One such new product is the PBO's new tax impact modelling tool, published on the PBO's website. This tool provides an accessible means for parliamentarians to explore the revenue impacts of tax changes and the redistributive impact of such changes by income and age group, one of the most frequently requested forms of analysis.⁸⁸

4.1.2. Expand the PBO's information sharing through social media

As mentioned above, the PBO's mandate is to provide the Senate and House of Commons with analysis. This involves communicating information in an effective manner and, moreover, making it available to parliamentarians in the channels of communication most accessed by them.

To this end, the PBO is constantly seeking new and improved ways to disseminate analysis, including webcasts, podcasts, Twitter and other social media.

Furthermore, on behalf of parliamentarians, the PBO shares relevant information with taxpayers and all members of society. This helps ensure that the public understands the importance of transparency in the nation's finances, as well as the

importance of the role played by the legislative branch in terms of accountability.

The PBO must ensure that analysis is made available to as wide an audience as possible. To this end, the Office is committed to using new media tools wherever possible to provide parliamentarians and the public with relevant and timely information.

As discussed above, the PBO launched its social media presence near the end of the 2013-14 FY, on March 15, 2014. By March 25, 2014, the PBO had 272 followers on Twitter. This social media presence has continued to grow, reaching 680 followers by October 14, 2014.

Figure 3-1 The PBO's First English Tweet



The PBO also prepared its first podcast for its report on Federal Contaminated Sites released 10 April 2014.⁸⁹

4.1.3. Support ongoing professional development for employees, in line with operational requirements and the execution of the PBO's legislative mandate and strategic priorities

The fundamental values of independence, non-partisanship, transparency, responsibility and technical expertise lie at the core of the performance of the PBO's legislative mandate. The

⁸⁷ *Parliament of Canada Act* RSC 1985 c P-1 s 79.2(a)

⁸⁸ Available on the PBO website at <http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/en/Tax+Tool>

⁸⁹ Available on the PBO website at <http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/en/Podcast>

PBO will continue to support ongoing professional development for employees, encouraging them to stay abreast of new trends. Team members must feel their skills are being appropriately used and developed so they can deliver superior and highly specialized service to parliamentarians.

As well, the PBO must demonstrate that it encourages and values the contribution and active participation of each team member.

In 2014, the Economic and Fiscal Analysis Team was awarded the Library of Parliament's Outstanding Team Award.

4.1.4. Defend and clarify the legislative right to obtain the relevant information required to carry out the PBO's mandate

It is vitally important to continue to defend the PBO's legislative right to obtain the financial or economic data that it requires to carry out its mandate to inform Parliament.

The *Parliament of Canada Act* provides that the Parliamentary Budget Officer is:

... entitled, by request made to the deputy head of a department ... to free and timely access to any financial or economic data in the possession of the department that are required for the performance of his or her mandate.

Over the years, certain government departments have occasionally hesitated, if not simply refused, to provide specific information the PBO has requested, often arguing that it is "outside the PBO's mandate".

This has led to certain impasses, making it difficult to respond to requests by parliamentarians.

Over the next few years, the PBO will renew its efforts to obtain information, which may take a number of forms. These include consulting parliamentary partners (for example, the Senate

and House of Commons administrations) on matters related to parliamentary procedures and legal considerations as they apply to Parliament; maintaining informal bilateral relationships with government departments and agencies; implementing memorandums of understanding; and any other means deemed appropriate.

In the 2013-14 FY, the PBO received responses to twice as many requests as the prior year and, after having taken its first case to court in defence of its mandate in 2012-13, received the court decision in April 2013. It also standardized its information request procedures, including tracking statistics and requiring reply forms. The reply form directs departments to specify whether they are providing the information and to articulate a legal basis for doing so, which helps the PBO determine whether it can and should assert its entitlement to the data. The Office is taking an increasingly active approach to following up on information requests and using other tools, such as making requests under the *Access to Information Act*.

4.1.5. Produce an annual administrative report for the PBO

In the past years, the Library of Parliament's annual report summarized some of the activities and studies carried out by the PBO. After a full six years of operations, however, it was incumbent upon the PBO to publish a comprehensive and statistical account of its activities and their impacts along with an explanation of the challenges it faced. Reporting on its activities in this way allows the PBO to communicate to parliamentarians, in a transparent and accountable manner, the work undertaken, the challenges encountered and the advances made.

This publication marks the PBO's first report on activities pursuant to this strategic priority.

5. Conclusion

The Parliamentary Budget Office provides independent, authoritative, and non-partisan fiscal analysis to parliamentarians. This includes analysing the nation's finances, the government's estimates, and economic trends, as well as costing proposals within federal jurisdiction when requested by parliamentarians.

Studies published by the IMF and OECD suggest that fiscal councils (i.e. independent fiscal institutions), including the PBO, contribute to stronger fiscal performance and more accurate and less biased fiscal forecasting. The PBO received a positive evaluation in an IMF case study considering its work.

Operational statistics for the 2013-14 FY demonstrate that the PBO provides a major

contribution to parliamentary and public debate and substantial contributions to budget transparency, understanding, and practices.

While overall the quality of government's fiscal reporting is improving, the government's refusal to disclose the details of Direct Program Expenses (DPE) or reconcile the Budget and Estimates continue to pose challenges for effective fiscal oversight.

In the coming years, the PBO will continue to make progress towards the objectives outlined in its 2013-18 Strategic Plan. This includes adding new high-quality products and services, expanding its social media presence, supporting professional development and, of utmost importance, defending the PBO's right to data to better serve and support Parliament.

6. Annex A: Information Requests in 2013-14 FY

Request	Response	Information Provided
IR0148 - PWGSC - The umbrella agreement between the Government of Canada and Irving Shipbuilding Inc. as per the National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy	IR0148 - Response from PWGSC - requested information received	Yes
IR0149 - PWGSC - The assessment that was undertaken by First Marine International on behalf of the Government of Canada of Irving Shipbuilding Inc.'s yard capacity	IR0149 - Response from PWGSC - requested information received	Yes
IR0145 - CBSA - The salary dollars for the last five fiscal years to call in replacements for border guards who have called in sick	IR0145 - Response from CBSA - requested information not received	No
IR0147 - CSC - The salary dollars for the last five fiscal years to call in replacements for corrections officers who have called in sick	IR0147 - Response CSC - Requested information received	Yes
IR0146 - F&O - The salary dollars for the last five fiscal years to call in replacements for coast guard officers who have called in sick	IR0146 - Response from DFO – requested information received	Yes
IR0144 - JCCBI - All Champlain bridge girder inspection reports for girders 1, 4, and 7	IR0144 - Response from JCCBI - Requested information not received	No
IR0143 - DND - The Halifax class's "as-delivered" weight, in light displacement tons	IR0143 - Response from DND - requested information partially received	No
IR0142 - DND - The Iroquois class's "as-delivered" weight, in light displacement tons	IR0142 - Response from DND - requested information received	Yes
IR0141 - TBS - Annual Financial Reports for the long-term disability component of the Public Service Management Insurance plan	IR0141 - Response from TBS – requested information received	Yes
IR0140 - TBS - All data and assumptions used to support the estimate of \$7.4 billion, presented in Budget 2014, of savings accruing from changes to the management of the Public Service Health Care Plan	IR0140 - Response from TBS – requested information received	Yes
IR0139 - Treasury Board of Canada - Annual Financial Reports for the Disability Insurance plan for calendar years 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013	IR0139 - Response from TBS – requested information received	Yes
IR0138 - Restatement of accumulated sick leave entitlements	IR0138 - Response from Finance Canada - Requested information not received. Information resides with the Comptroller General of Canada	No
	IR0138 - Response from The Comptroller General of Canada - requested information received	Yes
IR0137 - Privy Council Office - Transfer of Authorities to Create Shared Services Canada	IR0137 - Response from PCO – requested information partially received	No

IR0136 - VAC - Fiscal Impact of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in the Canadian Forces	IR0136 - Response from Veterans Affairs Canada - requested information received	Yes
IR0135 - Health Canada - Fiscal Impact of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in the Canadian Forces	IR0135 - Response from Health Canada - requested information received	Yes
IR0133 - National Defence - Fiscal Impact of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in the Canadian Forces	IR0133 – Response from National Defence – requested information not received	No
IR0134 - Finance Canada - Fiscal Impact of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in the Canadian Forces	IR0134 - Response from Finance Canada - requested information partially received	No
IR0134-A - Finance Canada - Follow-up - request for additional information pertaining to PTSD	IR0134-A - Response from Finance Canada with a recommendation we contact the Office of the Comptroller General of Canada	No
	IR0134-A - Response from Comptroller General of Canada - requested information received	Yes
IR0132 - FC - Cost Estimate of Bill C-511: An Act To Amend The Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act (Period Of Residence)	IR0132 - Response from Finance Canada - requested information received	Yes
IR0131 - FC - Cost Estimate of Bill C-513: An Act to promote and strengthen the Canadian retirement income system - Retirement Income Bill of Rights	IR0131 - Response from Finance Canada - requested information received	Yes
IR0130 - FC - Cost Estimate of Bill C-201: An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (travel and accommodation deduction for tradespersons)	IR0130 - Response from Finance Canada - requested information received	Yes
	IR0129 - Compliance Chart Revised September 26, 2013 to include responses received after September 18, 2013	No
	IR0129 - Compliance Chart Revised October 3, 2013 to include responses received after September 18, 2013	No
	IR0129 - Compliance Chart Revised October 10, 2013 to include responses received after September 18, 2013	No
IR0129 - Proposed Modernization of Sick Leave Benefits	IR0129 - Compliance Chart Revised October 18, 2013 to include responses received after September 18, 2013	No
	IR0129 - Compliance Chart Revised October 24, 2013 to include responses received after September 18, 2013	No
	IR0129 - Compliance Chart Revised November 1, 2013 to include responses received after September 18, 2013	Yes
IR0128 - Distribution List - Cost of implementing a new estimates reporting and control model	IR0128 - Response Compliance Chart - Revised September 17, 2013	No
IR0128 - Extension granted to September 10, 2013	IR0128 - Response Compliance Chart - Revised September 20, 2013	No
	IR0128 - Response Compliance Chart - Revised September 30, 2013	No

	IR0128 - responses from participating departments - all data completely provided	Yes
IR0127 - Financial data to support cost estimate of the Arctic Offshore Patrol Ships (AOPS) project	Response IR0127 - DFO - requested information partially received	No
IR0126 - TBS - Proposed Modernization of Sick Leave Benefits	IR0126 - Response from TBS – Requested information partially received	No
IR0125 - Veterans Affairs Canada - Funeral and Burial Program Funding, Last Post Fund	IR0125 - Response from Veterans Affairs Canada - requested information received	Yes
IR0125-A - Veterans Affairs Canada - request for additional information on the Last Post Fund	IR0125-A - Response from VAC - requested information partially received	No
IR0125-B - VAC - request for more information on the Last Post Fund	IR0125-B - Response from VAC - requested information received	Yes

7. Annex B: Publications in 2013-14 FY

Date	Title
25 March 14	Labour Market Assessment 2014
18 March 14	Main Estimates 2014-15
24 February 14	Supplementary Estimates (C) 2013-14
6 February 14	Fiscal Analysis of Sick Leave in the Federal Public Service
28 January 14	Standing Committee on National Finance (January 2014) – Opening Statement by Jean-Denis Fréchette
14 January 14	Expenditure Monitor: 2013-14 Q2
11 December 13	Labour Sensitivity Analysis for the Acquisition of Two Joint Support Ships
10 December 13	Revenue Impacts Arising from Tax Adjustments: 2014
5 December 13	Revised PBO Outlook and Assessment of the 2013 Update of Economic and Fiscal Projections
20 November 13	Economic and Fiscal Outlook Update: Follow-up Report to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance
18 November 13	Supplementary Estimates (B) 2013-14
4 November 13	Fiscal Analysis of Veterans Funeral and Burial Benefits
29 October 13	Standing Committee on Finance (October 2013) – Opening Statement by Jean-Denis Fréchette
28 October 13	Economic and Fiscal Outlook Update 2013
22 October 13	Expenditure Monitor: 2013-14 Q1
9 October 13	Federal Public Service Wage Growth: 2001-02 to 2011-12
26 September 13	Fiscal Sustainability Report 2013
25 September 13	Cost Estimate of an Adult Fitness Tax Credit
11 July 13	First Nations School Infrastructure Funding Requirements: British Columbia
6 June 13	Fiscal Savings from Budget 2012
17 May 13	Supplementary Estimates (A) 2013-14
30 April 13	Standing Committee on Finance (April 2013) - Opening Statement by Sonia L'Heureux
29 April 13	Economic and Fiscal Outlook
15 April 13	Expenditure Monitor: 2012-13 Q3
11 April 13	A Cost Estimate of Federal Infrastructure

8. Annex C: Reasons for Closing Files

Year	Reasons for closing files
2008	1 request was outside the PBO's mandate 1 request was refused due to budget limitations 2 requests were encompassed by projects already in progress 1 request was abandoned (seat resignation)
2009	2 requests were outside the PBO's mandate 2 requests were refused due to budget limitations 2 requests were closed due to their unmanageable scope 2 requests were abandoned (non-response by requestors) 1 request was better addressed as an ongoing component of reports 1 request was not submitted by a Parliamentarian
2010	3 requests were outside the PBO's mandate 1 request was refused due to budget limitations 1 request was closed due to lack of data to provide an adequate answer 2 requests were withdrawn or deferred
2011 (Election writ dropped March 24 2011)	2 requests were outside the PBO's mandate 6 requests were closed due to the election call 1 request was withdrawn
2012	1 request was refused as too difficult to adequately cost 3 requests were refused due to the absence of a material impact
2013	2 requests were outside the PBO's mandate 1 request was refused due to the absence of a material impact 1 request was refused due to an inability to get data 2 requests were withdrawn following discussions