



2 February 2026

# Parliamentary Budget Office Activity report

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## At a glance

This report provides an update on Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) activities since the last Activity report published on 23 October 2025. Key highlights include:

- Dr Martin Parkinson AC PSM has completed his independent post-election review of the operations of the PBO and provided the Review report to the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit (JCPAA). Once it is tabled in Parliament, we will work through the individual recommendations and consider how we will respond to them.
- Demand for costings and budget analysis services continued to follow the parliamentary cycle. Consistent with the parliamentary cycle, demand is lower in the period after the election than prior to the election. However, demand was higher in both Quarter 1 & 2 than in the same post-election period for the previous Parliament (around 22% higher) (Figure 2).
- We published 4 self-initiated items since the last activity report – *2025-26 National Fiscal Outlook*, *2025-26 MYEFO Snapshot*, and updates to our *Historical fiscal data* and *Build your own Budget* publications.

# PLANNED ACTIVITIES BY FUNCTION

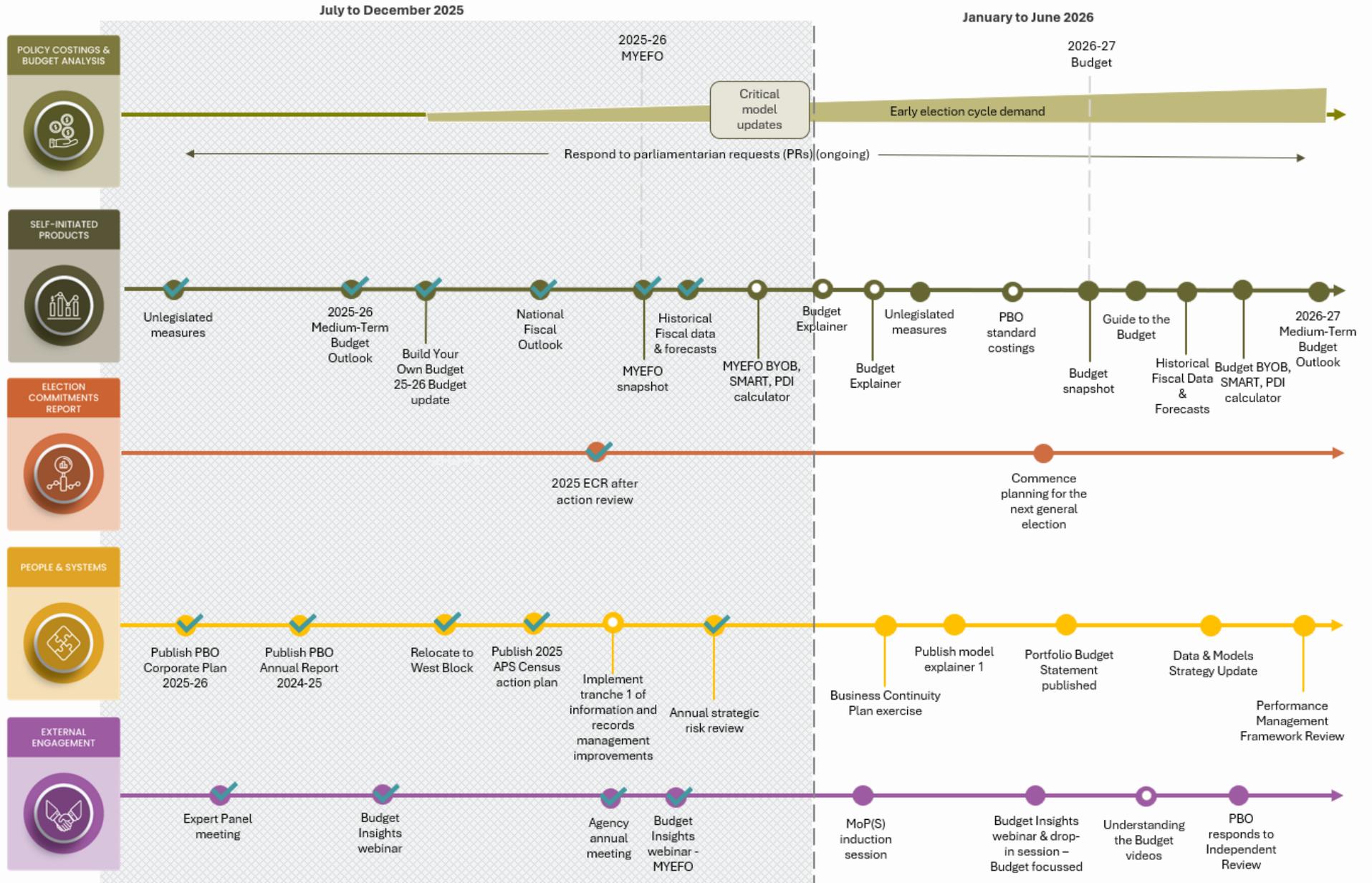
JULY 2025 TO JUNE 2026



Parliamentary Budget Office

## LEGEND

- ✓ Activity complete
- Activity commenced



## Our activities in detail

This report provides an update on our key activities since our previous Activity report (published 23 October 2025) with information up to 31 December 2025. This report provides information on how we are delivering against the priorities in our [Corporate plan](#). More information is in our [Annual report](#) and previous [Activity reports](#).

### Independent Review of the PBO

On 4 September 2025, the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit (JCPAA), which provides oversight of the PBO, exercised their option to commission an [independent post-election review](#) of the PBO. The Committee requested that the Review be conducted by Dr Martin Parkinson AC PSM. Dr Parkinson has now completed the Review and provided the report to the JCPAA.

The purpose of the Review was to examine and provide a report on the effectiveness and efficiency of the PBO in executing its purpose to inform the parliament by providing independent and non-partisan analysis of the budget cycle, fiscal policy and the financial implications of proposals. The PBO provided secretariat support to Dr Parkinson for the duration of the Review process, and the agency is positioning itself to respond to recommendations arising from the Review. Once it is tabled in Parliament, we will work through the individual recommendations and consider how we will respond to them.

### Parliamentarian requests

The PBO continued to experience strong demand for costing and budget analysis services for this period of the parliamentary cycle (see Table 1 and Figure 2). Quarter 2 of 2025-26 has shown strong demand for parliamentarian request services for the second quarter post-election, with 69 requests received (Table 1), and 67 requests completed (Table 1) with a total of 191 options (Table 2).

**Table 1: Costing and budget analysis request performance**

	20-21 total	21-22 total	22-23 total	23-24 total	24-25 total	25-26 Q1	25-26 Q2	Total YTD
Requests received <sup>(a)</sup>	421	1,488	271	856	1,772	64	69	<b>133</b>
Requests completed <sup>(a)</sup>	272	1,021	243	722	1,709	53	67	<b>120</b>
Requests withdrawn <sup>(b)</sup>	48	548	11	27	180	4	5	<b>9</b>

a) Costings prepared for *Election Commitments Reports* (ECR) are included in these counts as follows: 316 in the 2022 ECR and 601 in the 2025 ECR.

b) In election years (2021-22 and 2024-25), most of these requests were automatically withdrawn due to the expiration of the parliament in accordance with the PBO's legislative mandate which does not allow for requests to carry over between parliaments. In 2022, 415 withdrawn requests related to the expiration of the parliament, and 112 in 2025.

Figure 2: Number of completed request options from parliamentarians

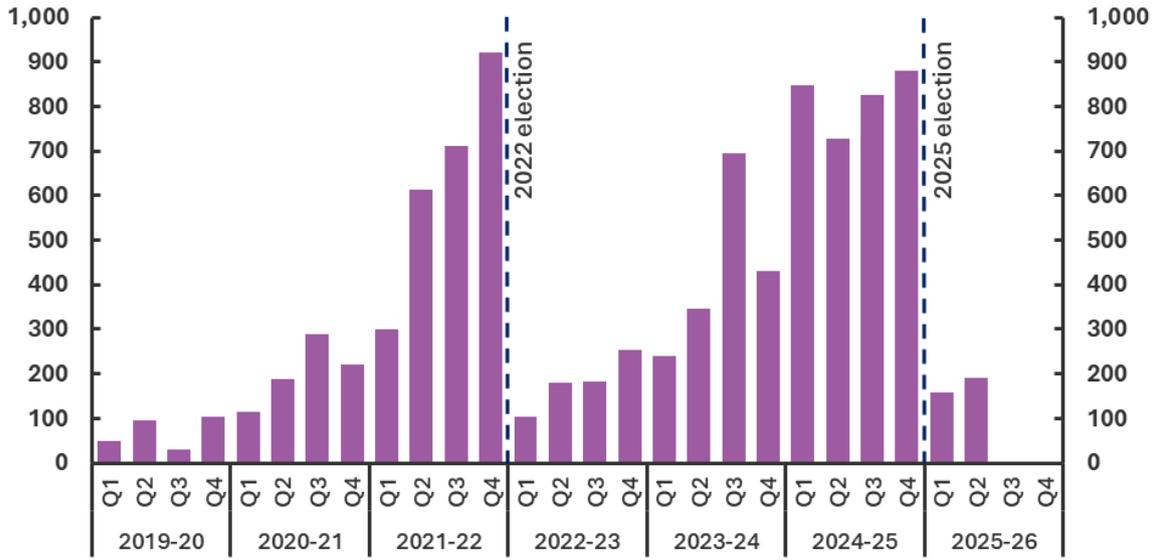


Table 2: Costing and budget analysis request options performance to 31 December 2025

	20-21 total	21-22 total	22-23 total	23-24 total	24-25 total	25-26 Q1	25-26 Q2	Total YTD
Request options outstanding at the start of period	40	343	35	86	380	70	116	116
Request options received in period	1,253	3,241 <sup>(a)</sup>	786	2,046	3,268 <sup>(a)</sup>	217 <sup>(c)</sup>	111	328
Request options completed in period	813	2,550 <sup>(a)</sup>	721	1,711	3,281 <sup>(a)</sup>	157	191	348
Average time to completion per option (business days)	31	29	15	19	19 <sup>(e)</sup>	17	25	21
Median time to completion per option (business days)	35	18	14	15	15 <sup>(e)</sup>	14	24	18
Request options withdrawn in period	137	999 <sup>(b)</sup>	14	41	297 <sup>(b)</sup>	14	14	28
Request options outstanding at the end of period	343	35	86	380	70	116 <sup>(c)</sup>	22 <sup>(d)</sup>	22

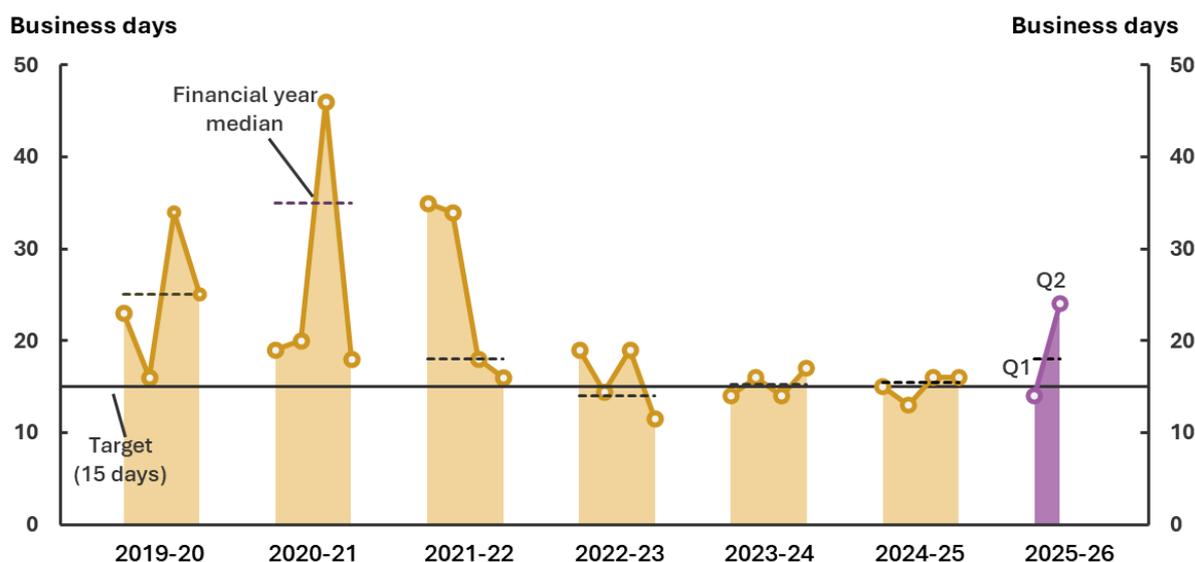
Note, the table identifies the number of ‘options’ received by the PBO, noting that a single request can contain multiple options.

- a) For 2021-22 this includes 316 costings prepared for the *2022 Election Commitments Report*. For 2024-25 this includes 601 costings prepared for the *2025 Election Commitments Report*.
- b) Most of these requests were automatically withdrawn due to the expiration of the 46<sup>th</sup> and 47<sup>th</sup> Parliaments in accordance with the PBO’s legislative mandate which does not allow for requests to carry over between parliaments. 677 options were withdrawn in 2022. 197 options were automatically withdrawn in Q3 2024-25 due to the expiration of the 47<sup>th</sup> Parliament.
- c) Since the publication of the PBO 2025-26 Q1 Activity Report, we have re-examined metadata for Q1 of 2025-26 and recalculated the number of options for requests that were outstanding. This has led to the total request options received in Q1 2025-26 revised upward from 174 to 217, and the total outstanding options at the end of Q1 2025-26 revised upward from 70 to 116.
- d) This is a preliminary number based on an initial assessment of the number of options involved in each parliamentary request and is subject to change on completion of the costing.
- e) Average and median day counts exclude costings prepared for the *2025 Election Commitments Report*.

Our median time for completion of parliamentary requests increased from 14 days in Quarter 1 to 24 business days in Quarter 2 of 2025-26 (Figure 4).

Internal workflow efficiencies, automation, strong stakeholder relationships and the maturation of our organisational model supported our completion times across the 2024-25 period. However, strong demand during Quarters 1 and 2 of 2025-26 coincided with post-election activities including costing model redevelopments, work on the PBO’s self-initiated research publications, a redirection of some resources to support the independent review of the PBO and post-election staff leave which resulted in the increased median time for completion in this period.

**Figure 4: Median response time for policy costing and budget analysis requests**



**Table 3: Completed costing and budget analysis requests, disaggregated by whether the request required an associated information request to 31 December 2025**

	22-23 total	23-24 total	24-25 total	25-26 Q1	25-26 Q2	Total YTD
Request options completed	721	1,711	2,680 <sup>(a)</sup>	157	191	348
With information requests	220	388	484	59	26	85
Without information requests	501	1,323	2,196	98	165	263
Percentage with information requests	31%	23%	18%	38%	14%	24%
Average time to completion (business days)	15	19	18	17	25	21
With information requests	22	29	27	16	31	21
Without information requests	13	16	17	17	24	22
Median time to completion (business days)	14	15	15	14	24	18
With information requests	22	25	23	13	34	18
Without information requests	10	11	13	15	22	18

Note: the table identifies the number of request options completed by the PBO, noting that a single request can contain multiple options.

(a) Total excludes 601 costings prepared for the *2025 Election Commitments Report*.

A driver of the time to completion is whether the PBO needs to source information from agencies to complete the request. Agencies usually have 10 days to provide information to the PBO. Median time to completion statistics for each request are significantly shorter where an information request is not required (Table 3).

### PBO requests for information from Australian Government agencies

Table 4 shows the time taken by agencies to respond to information requests. On average, requests are usually answered in 10 days, with complex requests sometimes taking longer. In 2025-26, there were 55 completed requests across 11 agencies, provided in an average of 9 business days.

**Table 4: Agency responses to PBO information requests to 31 December 2025<sup>(a)</sup>**

	20-21 total	21-22 total	22-23 total	23-24 total	24-25 total	25-26 Q1	25-26 Q2	Total YTD
Responses received in period	523	538	354	429	571	34	21	55
Percentage received on time (%)	99	99	99	99	99	100	100	100
Average response time (bus. days)	11	6	10	12	10	10	9	9

(a) Figures updated across 2024-25 to reflect final responses received.

Note: Average response time excludes agency standing information requests without due dates.

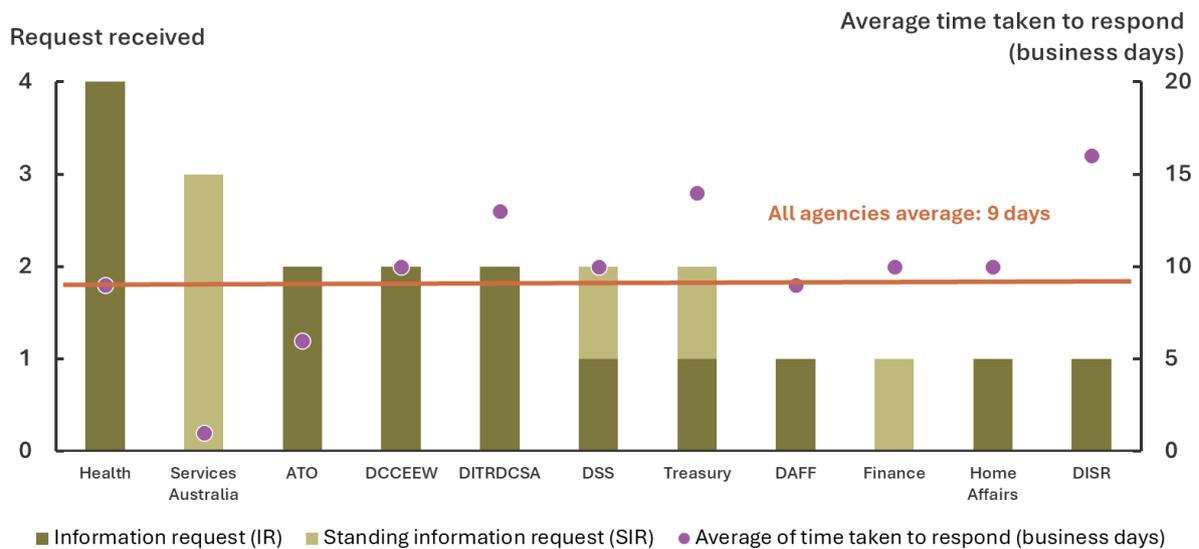
Table 5 provides the breakdown of responsiveness for individual agencies for the period 1 October to 31 December 2025 (the top 10 agencies and their responsiveness are highlighted in Figure 5). There were no late responses during the period. The PBO negotiates extensions with agencies on timeframes to complete requests where appropriate.

**Table 5: Information request responsiveness by agencies: 1 October to 31 December 2025**

Commonwealth entity	Responses received in period	Average of time taken to respond (business days)	Responses received after due date	% late
Australian Taxation Office	2	6	0	0%
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	1	9	0	0%
Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water	2	10	0	0%
Department of Finance	1	10	0	0%
Department of Health, Disability and Ageing	4	9	0	0%
Department of Home Affairs	1	10	0	0%
Department of Industry, Science and Resources	1	16	0	0%
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts	2	13	0	0%
Department of Social Services	2	10	0	0%
Department of the Treasury	2	14	0	0%
Services Australia	3	1	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>

Note: Average response time excludes agency standing information requests without due dates.

**Figure 6: Top 10 Agency responses to PBO information requests with average response time, 1 October to 31 December 2025**



### Publicly released parliamentary requests referenced in the public debate

PBO responses to parliamentary requests are usually confidential, except for those prepared for parliamentary committees. If a requestor asks the PBO to publicly release their request, it is subsequently published on the PBO website (Table 6). One parliamentary request was publicly released since the last Activity report.

**Table 6: Costings or budget analysis publicly released and referenced between 1 October and 31 December 2025**

Description of policy	Party or Parliamentarian	Date of PBO release	Number of references*	Media type
Extension of the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program	Senator Matthew Canavan	16 December 2025	0	n/a

\*Includes syndicated online publications.

Note: While the PBO endeavours to capture all policy announcements that reference PBO costings, there may be announcements missing from the table above, for example, because the announcement was not reflected in any media monitored by the PBO.

### Misrepresentation of PBO responses

We routinely monitor references to the PBO in media articles to ensure we, and the information or advice we prepare are referenced correctly. Our approach for assessing and reacting to public references to our work is on our [website](#).

Between 1 October 2025 and 31 December 2025, we have requested a clarification or correction twice. This is a decrease from the previous report (9) coinciding with the public release of some costings. The instances were addressed to the PBO's satisfaction.

We report this information at an aggregate level for transparency while maintaining confidentiality.

## Self-initiated program

Our self-initiated work program is set around the themes of fiscal sustainability, medium- and long-term fiscal risks, improving understanding of the budget, and distributional analysis. Since the last Activity report, we have released 4 publications (see Attachment A for our planned publication schedule):

- *2025-26 National Fiscal Outlook* (4 December 2025)
- *2025-26 MYEFO Snapshot* (17 December 2025)
- Historical fiscal data – MYEFO update (18 December 2025)
- *Build your own Budget* – MYEFO update (23 December 2025).

## External engagement

A key priority for the PBO is to elevate our interactions with parliamentarians, their staff, and committees especially leading up to the federal election. We are committed to continual improvement in our service delivery and to making our work accessible to our audience.

Parliamentarians and staff are welcome to call, email or come by our office. Occasionally parliamentarians and other stakeholders request bespoke training and education sessions. Where appropriate, the PBO partners with the Parliamentary Library to deliver these sessions either in person or via Teams.

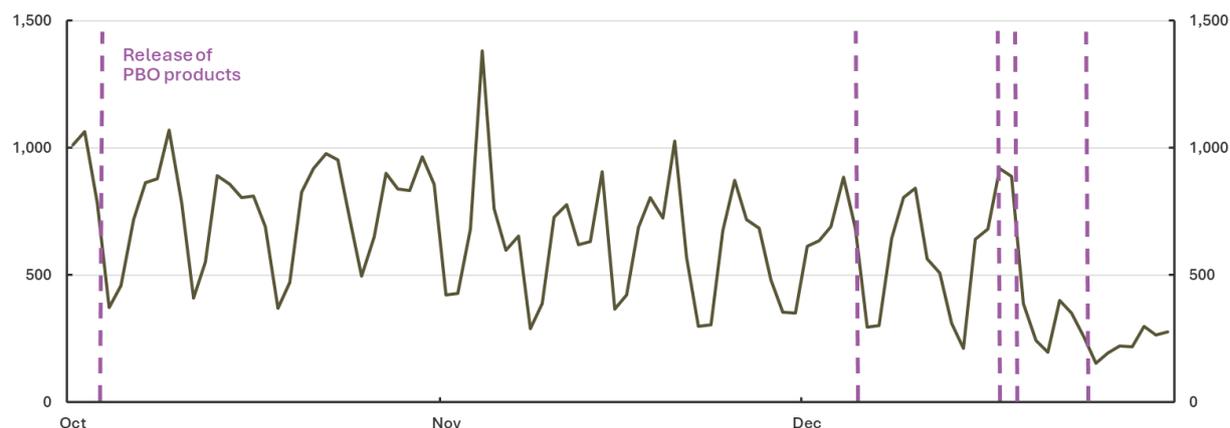
Activities since the last report include:

- offering and providing individual briefings to members of the 48<sup>th</sup> Parliament to assist understanding the budget and the services provided by the PBO
- participating in the International Monetary Fund's annual Article IV consultation visit
- meeting with the OECD team drafting their 2025 Economic Survey of Australia in October to discuss Australia's fiscal position
- presenting to students at the ANU's Managing Government Finance's course in early October
- presenting the PBO's *Build your own Budget* tool to the APS Economics Community of Practice in October
- sharing the work of the PBO with a group of officials from the Philippines Legislative Congress, who were part of a study mission to learn about how public policy is formed in Australia
- presented a webinar on Navigating the MYEFO as part of our *Budget Insights* program (December 2025), providing the opportunity to learn about key elements of the outlook and ask questions of senior PBO staff. The session was attended by staff from more than 20 parliamentarian offices as well as staff from the procedures teams from both the Senate and House of Representatives, and the Parliamentary Library.

## Digital engagement statistics – 1 October to 31 December 2025

Interest in our products can be seen through webpage view statistics (Figure 7). The PBO website generally receives an increase in views when products are released. The greatest number of views in a single day was on 4 November 2025. Unlike previous trends, this did not coincide with a product release, and the influx of views cannot be determined. Across the reporting period, the *Budget Explainer: Dividend imputation and franking credits*, published in June 2024, continues to receive the highest page views (Table 7).

**Figure 7: Overview of website views and release of PBO products  
(1 October to 31 December 2025)**



**Table 7: Top 10 performing PBO product web pages by views (1 October to 31 December 2025)**

	Page title	Date first released	Type	Total page views*
1	Budget Explainer: Dividend imputation and franking credits (1)	13 Jun 2024	Publication	1,440
2	\$1,000 instant tax deduction for work-related expenses (new)	20 Jun 2025	2025 ECR costing (ALP)	1,039
3	The Progressive GST (new)	7 Aug 2025	Costing	888
4	2024-25 National Fiscal Outlook (2)	30 Oct 2024	Publication	806
5	2025-26 Medium-Term Budget Outlook: Beyond the Budget (new)	18 Sep 2025	Publication	771
6	Build your own Budget (BYOB) (4)	16 Dec 2022	Interactive tool	655
7	Phase out negative gearing and CGT tax concessions for property investors with more than one investment property (new)	20 Jun 2025	2025 ECR costing (Greens)	640
8	Budget Explainer: Fuel taxation in Australia (3)	21 Sep 2022	Publication	552
9	2025-26 Budget Snapshot (7)	25 Mar 2025	Publication	516
10	Delivering 100,000 homes and 5% deposits for all first home buyers (new)	20 Jun 2025	2025 ECR costing (ALP)	503

\* Adjusted for bounce rate. Where a product has been updated, the 'Date released' is when it was first released. Views are for the quarter.

# The information in the brackets is the position in the top 10 for the product in the previous report.

## People and systems

We continue to invest in our people and systems to build depth, drive efficiency and improve resilience. A key focus is to maintain a high-performing team culture and embed an agile arrangement where all technical teams are involved in completing parliamentary requests, engagement and self-initiated activity, promoting cross-team collaboration and operational flexibility.

### Staffing

At 31 December 2025, we had 44 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff and a headcount of 48, a reduction from the election period peak of 61 FTE staff and a headcount of 64, reflecting the need to scale back staffing to achieve the PBO budget. The peak figures include staff seconded from other Commonwealth agencies. Throughout the year we will look to bring in graduate secondees.

### Employee Census

We participated in the 2025 Australian Public Service Employee Census that ran from 5 May to 6 June 2024. We continue to have a highly engaged workforce, with an employee engagement index score of 79 (down from 80 in 2024), and a response rate of 87%, down from 97% in the previous year but consistent with our 2023 participation rate.

The PBO's Staff Consultative Forum have developed an action plan to respond to feedback from the Census. The action plan sets out that communication and support for wellbeing within the agency are scored highly by staff, however there are opportunities for improvement in areas such as change management and learning and development. The action plan was published in December 2025 and is available on our [website](#), together with our 2025 Census highlights report.

### Information and communication technology (ICT) capability

The PBO operates in a modern, collaborative, and integrated cloud-based ICT environment. We continue to work with the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS), our ICT platform provider, to ensure technology meets our business needs.

We continue to improve our internal ICT capability, taking advantage of the greater availability of low/no code tools such as Microsoft Power Platform. This has allowed us to internally develop and maintain a suite of workflow apps and automations to support our work with greater efficiency. By building the tools ourselves we have been agile in responding to unexpected or emerging needs, enabling us to deploy updates and new features in a highly responsive manner.

To build on these improvements, we have established a comprehensive transformation roadmap to guide the next phases of our ICT development. This roadmap sets out a clear sequence of initiatives to ensure our technology environment continues to support the organisation's strategic priorities. It will also help us prioritise investment, coordinate cross-team efforts, and proactively plan for emerging opportunities and risks, ensuring the PBO remains modern, adaptable and well-positioned to meet future demands.

## Attachment A: Self-initiated program

**Table A1: 2025-26 Self-initiated program – planned and published**

Title of publication	Publication	
	Planned	Actual
<b>Quarter 1</b>		
Unlegislated measures tracker	-	21 Aug 2025
Build Your Own Budget (BYOB) – 2025-26 Budget update	Sept 2025	18 Sept 2025
2025-26 Medium-Term Budget Outlook: Beyond the Budget	Sept 2025	18 Sept 2025
<b>Quarter 2</b>		
2025-26 National Fiscal Outlook	Q2	4 Dec 2025
2025-26 MYEFO Snapshot	Dec 2025	17 Dec 2025
Historical Fiscal Data – MYEFO update	Dec 2025	18 Dec 2025
<b>Quarter 3</b>		
BYOB – 2025-26 MYEFO update	Jan 2026	23 Dec 2025
Small Model of Australian Representative Taxpayers (SMART) – 2025-26 MYEFO update	Jan 2026	-
Unlegislated measures tracker (post MYEFO)	Feb 2026	-
Budget Explainer	Q3	-
<b>Quarter 4</b>		
2026-27 Budget Snapshot	May 2026	-
Guide to the 2026-27 Budget	May 2026	-
Historical fiscal data – 2026-27 Budget update	May 2026	-
BYOB – 2026-27 Budget update	June 2026	-
SMART – 2026-27 Budget update	June 2026	-
2026-27 Medium-Term Budget Outlook: Beyond the Budget	June 2026	-
Budget Explainer	Q4	-