



**ROD BARTON MP**  
Member for Eastern Metropolitan Region  
Parliament of Victoria | Legislative Council



Ms. Blandthorn MP  
Chair, Public Accounts and Estimates Committee  
Parliament of Victoria  
Spring Street, East Melbourne, Victoria  
Australia 3002

29 April 2021

Dear Ms Blandthorn

**Parliamentary Inquiry into the Parliamentary Budget Officer**

I write to you to pass on my comments relating to the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee inquiry reviewing the operational and resourcing arrangements for the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO).

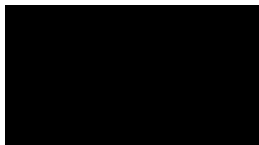
Over the course of my term in Parliament, I have used the services of the PBO a number of times. On each occasion, I have found it to be invaluable to my office and integral to supporting and planning our responses to various positions of Government. Without this resource minor parties, such as the Transport Matters Party and cross-bench and independent MPs, would be left without the support needed to understand the impact of proposals or indeed formulate their own credible policy positions.

Minor parties are not able to lean on resources within government departments or indeed well-established party administration and management to assist them to form robust economic proposals. The PBO therefore represents a means to obtain information that would otherwise not be easily accessible and in this way it levels the playing field in relation to financial expertise between government, the opposition, minor parties and independent MPs.

The PBO is critical to providing independent advice to elected members of Parliament and in my experience they have always worked to address any request professionally and to the highest of standards. My only concern with the delivery of information has been with the timeliness of the service. We appreciate the complexities of the tasks that come before the PBO however, we understand that in some cases there are delays in completing costings as they can rely on input from Government departments which have not always been forthcoming with the necessary information or have provided incomplete data with extensive delays. This is appalling behavior from areas of the public service which reeks of arrogance, hinders the PBOs performance and flies in the face of an open, democratic government which undermines the whole process. This should not be tolerated and the responsibility must fall to the relevant minister to ensure a culture of compliance within the machinations of their portfolio.

To improve the performance of the PBO we recommend amendments to the relevant Act to compel government departments to provide relevant information to the PBO in a timely manner. In addition, we would advocate for additional funding/resources for the PBO to assist with the turnaround of services.

Regards



Rod Barton MP

Leader, Transport Matters Party

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