



MEDIA RELEASE

REPORT ON THE PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICE 2015 POST-ELECTION REPORT

13 October 2015

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) is encouraging the NSW Government to adopt the recommendations of the former Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO), Mr Stephen Bartos PSM, to improve the capacity of the PBO to assist in the conduct of future NSW elections.

“The PBO has had a key role in the past two elections,” notes Bruce Notley-Smith MP, Public Accounts Committee Chair. “Having a PBO increases transparency and public accountability in elections by giving an additional assurance to voters and providing informed advice and costings of election policies to the major parties.”

“The PBO is required to report to PAC following State general elections,” says Mr Notley-Smith, “This ensures accountability of the PBO to the Parliament, and provides a means for the PBO to report on its operational arrangements and the effectiveness of its interactions with the major parties. The PBOs latest Report has shown that while this has been done well, there is still room for improvements to be made.”

“Although the PBO reports to the Committee, there is currently no direct requirement for the Government to consider its recommendations. The Committee therefore considered it necessary to advocate on behalf of the PBO.”

“It is important that the recommendations and work of the previous PBO are heeded by the NSW Government, and that measures are taken to improve the capacity of the PBO,” said Mr Notley-Smith. Broadly, the PBO has recommended that:

- the PBO Act be amended to clarify the PBOs operations and promote better practice;
- Parliamentary leaders be encouraged to submit earlier costings to enable more comprehensive scrutiny;
- improvements be made to the response times of government agencies; and
- the PBO Act be amended to require the disclosure of decisions taken between the Half-Yearly Budget Update and the caretaker period.

The PAC Report, released today, endorses all recommendations made in the PBO Report and seeks a formal response from the NSW Government.

A copy of the PAC Report can be accessed on the Committee's website at: <http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/publicaccounts>.

A copy of the PBO Report can be accessed on the Parliament's website at: <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/la/latabdoc.nsf/0/7FFEA04274CE478ACA257E6F00215C7C>

MEDIA: Bruce Notley-Smith MP, Chair, (02) 9389 6669