

**Submission**  
**No 2**

## **INQUIRY INTO THE PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICE**

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**Date Received:** 12/08/2011



**Submission to the Committee on the Parliamentary Budget Office  
Parliament of New South Wales\***

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August 11, 2011

\* Please note this paper was submitted to the Joint Select Committee on the Parliamentary Budget Office – Parliament of Australia in December 2010.

The purpose of this paper is to describe the mandate and the first two years of experience of Canada's Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) starting from the appointment of the Budget Officer on March 25, 2008. The paper reviews the Canadian context, the legislation, the operating model and lessons learned. A number of issues are highlighted to facilitate discussions on how to strengthen the role of a legislative budget office in Canada. The views expressed are those of the author, Kevin Page, Canada's first Parliamentary Budget Officer.

## **Canadian Context**

There are a number of factors that are important to understand the context for the creation of a Parliamentary Budget Officer position in Canada including the nature of Canada's parliamentary system, the recent evolution of Canadian public finance and the passage of the *Accountability Act* in Canada in December of 2006.

### *Canadian Parliamentary System and Financial Procedures*

Canada is both a parliamentary democracy and a constitutional monarchy<sup>1</sup>. The *Constitution Act* provides that there will be one Parliament for Canada consisting of the Crown, the Senate and the House of Commons. The Senate is composed of people appointed by the Governor General to represent Canadian provinces and territories. Members of the House of Commons are elected by Canadians. The executive authority is vested formally in the Queen. Every act of government is carried out in the name of the Crown, but the authority for those acts comes from the Canadian people. The executive function belongs to the Governor-in-Council, which is the Governor General acting with and on the advice of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

The executive is responsible for managing all the revenue of the state and makes the financial requirements known to the House of Commons. The Canadian Constitution is clear with respect to right of Parliament to control public money. First, it says that all duties and revenues received "*shall form one Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF)*". Second, it says that the balance in the CRF "*shall be appropriated by the Parliament of Canada*". The bottom-line is that no tax may be imposed or money spent without the consent of Parliament.

The important question regarding the consideration of the establishment of a Parliamentary Budget Officer is whether or not Parliament (not just the executive) has access to the financial capacity it needs to carry out its fiduciary responsibilities. This is a fundamental question for parliamentarians and Canadians.

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<sup>1</sup> See Marleau and Montpetit, *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, Chenelière McGraw Hill Canada, 2000

### *Genesis for the Parliamentary Budget Officer*

It can be argued that the economic and fiscal genesis for the creation of the Parliamentary Budget Officer was a long time in the making and reflected, in large part, three factors that eventually shaped the legislative mandate of the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

First, there were frustrations expressed by parliamentarians over the persistent underestimations of projected federal budgetary deficits in the 1980s by the Department of Finance followed by a period of persistent underestimation of federal surpluses starting in the late 1990s. Parliamentarians raised concerns that persistent forecasting errors were having a negative impact on the formulation of public policy. Two different reports were prepared to examine the forecasting issue and both suggested consideration of an independent forecasting agency: one was prepared in 1994 by a consulting firm (Ernst and Young) and another was prepared by an independent private sector economist (Tim O'Neil) in 2005 and tabled in the House of Commons<sup>2</sup>.

Second, parliamentarians have raised concerns in recent years about cost overruns on large federal projects and a lack of financial transparency. Some of the files in question became significant political issues such as the implementation of the Firearms Registry and the Secure Channel. In retrospect, the issue is one of whether or not additional financial due diligence by parliamentarians at the front end of the implementation process, possibly with assistance from independent financial expertise, would have minimized some of the cost overruns that were experienced.

Third, while it is generally stated that the control of national finance is a principal task of parliamentary government, parliamentarians have indicated that they do not have sufficient access to financial expertise to deal with the complexities of scrutinizing the budget and estimates (i.e., appropriations) processes. Parliament's most recent comprehensive review of the estimates was undertaken in 2003 by the House Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates. At that time, the Committee noted that "while parliamentary committees were intended to be bodies where detailed scrutiny of government spending and performance would occur, this was not being done."

### *The Government 2006 Platform Commitment and the Accountability Act*

The government's 2006 election platform made three commitments with respect reforms in the area of political accountability and a legislative budget officer:

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<sup>2</sup> See Tim O'Neil, *Review of Canadian Federal Fiscal Forecasting Processes and Systems*, Document tabled in the House of Commons, June 20, 2005

- (i) to create an **independent** Parliamentary Budget Authority to provide objective analysis directly to Parliament about the state of the nation's finances and trends in the national economy;
- (ii) to require government departments and agencies to provide **accurate, timely information** to the Parliamentary Budget Authority to ensure it has the information it needs to provide accurate analyses to Parliament; and
- (iii) to ensure that the government fiscal forecasts are updated quarterly and that they provide **complete data** for both revenue and spending forecasts.

Clearly, what was promised in spirit and commitment was an independent authority with an expansive mandate for economic and fiscal analysis. The understanding from conversations with members of the government was that the commitments were modelled after the Congressional Budget Office in the United States – a legislative budget office that was created in the 1970s and has maintained a strong reputation for professional, high quality independent analysis.

The government's political commitments culminated in the passage of the *Federal Accountability Act (FAA)* by the Canadian Parliament in December 2006. The FAA was an act providing for conflict of interest rules, restrictions on election financing and measures respecting administrative transparency, oversight and accountability.

The FAA created a number of independent offices and officers who report to Parliament on the administration of the government including the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

- The Commissioner of Lobbying replaced the Registrar of Lobbyists as a fully independent office with greater investigative powers.
- The Public Sector Integrity Commissioner promotes exposure of wrongdoing and protects the informant (whistle-blower) from negative repercussions in the workplace.
- The Procurement Ombudsman investigates complaints against procurement practices in the government. It reviews procurement practices across government.
- The Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner administers the Conflict of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons.
- The Parliamentary Budget Officer provides Parliament with objective analysis about the estimates of the government, the state of the nation's finances, and trends in the national economy.

## Legislation

The *Accountability Act* served as enabling legislation to change the *Parliament of Canada Act* and enshrine the position and mandate of the Parliamentary Budget Officer into parliamentary law. The relevant text from the Act is provided in the **Annex** in full detail.

There are a number of key components to the legislation including the appointment, the mandate, access to information, and powers to contract. There are also a number of issues with the legislation that have created early problems in the implementation of the office and, it is argued, should be addressed in the future.

### *Appointment*

The legislation establishes the Parliamentary Budget Officer as an officer of the Library of Parliament. It is a Governor-in-Council appointment. The Parliamentary Librarian of the Library of Parliament is tasked to form a review committee for the appointment and to submit three names for consideration through the Leader of the Government of the House of Commons. The Parliamentary Budget Officer holds office at pleasure for a renewable term of not more than five years.

The legislation did not provide for an independent authority as was the political commitment. Instead, the Parliamentary Budget Officer is an officer in the Library of Parliament.

Independence has important significance in the financial domain – it means being free from political and bureaucratic interference. It is problematic, if the Parliamentary Budget Officer thinks the budget of the office will be reduced if the office releases controversial but necessary reports. The budget of the Parliamentary Budget Office was reduced in 2009-10 after the office released controversial reports on the costing of Canada's engagement in Afghanistan and its economic and fiscal outlook in 2008.

As noted, the position of the Parliamentary Budget Officer is a Governor-in-Council appointment that holds office during pleasure. A true independent budget authority should be appointed by Parliament and dismissed for cause. It is problematic for a budget officer to provide analysis that may be used by members of Parliament to hold the government to account if that person works at pleasure and can be dismissed without cause by the Prime Minister.

### *Mandate*

The legislative mandate of the Parliamentary Budget Officer is “*to provide independent analysis to the Senate and to the House of Commons about the state of the nation's finances, the estimates of the government and trends in the national economy*”. As well, individual parliamentarians can request analysis

of the financial costs of proposals that relate to a matter over which Parliament has jurisdiction. The legislation establishes a working relationship with three “named” committees: the Standing Committee on Finance of the House of Commons; the Standing Committee on National Finance of the Senate; and the Standing Committee on Public Accounts of the House of Commons. In addition, committees examining the estimates (i.e., appropriations) can request the Parliamentary Budget Officer to undertake research.

In retrospect, relative to the political commitments made before the legislation was passed, the mandate the Parliamentary Budget Officer was expanded beyond analysis of economic trends and the nation’s finances to include – costing and the estimates (i.e., examination of appropriations). In effect, the mandate afforded to the Parliamentary Budget Officer would be relatively large, similar in many respects to large legislative budget offices like in the US, Mexico and South Korea. Clearly, the mandate commitment was addressed – sending a signal that access to analysis for parliamentarians was important. Unfortunately, the original planned budget of \$2.8 million<sup>3</sup> remained modest relative to the mandate and benchmarks including central agencies in Canada and in other budget offices across the world with broad mandates. In simple terms, authority to do the work was provided without commensurate resources.

#### *Access to Information*

The legislation does provide an information provision for the Parliamentary Budget Officer – including free and timely access to data, excluding of course data of a personal nature or deemed to be cabinet confidence. Access to information and expertise in an open and transparent operating model is essential for the Parliamentary Budget Officer to carry out the work.

The PBO informational protocol is available on its Web site ([www.parl.gc.ca/pbo-dpb](http://www.parl.gc.ca/pbo-dpb)). It was developed in collaboration with officials in central agencies. It includes principles like transparency, as well as issues related to scope, timing, cost and denial of information. If the PBO is denied access to the requested information — or alternatively, when there is an unreasonable delay in providing the requested information, which effectively amounts to a denial of access — as is the convention with the Auditor General, the PBO will report the matter to Parliament.

For cases when access to information is denied because the department deems it to be a cabinet confidence, the PBO may request that the Clerk of the Privy Council certify this position in writing. In cases of deadlock and as a last resort, the PBO reserves the right to seek a legal remedy in the Federal Court of Canada.

The PBO has had differing experiences working with federal departments. Written interactions with various Deputy Ministers are posted on the Web site. It is the experience to date that information is exchanged if there is mutual interest. The impediments are often cultural in nature. It can be argued that there is a

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<sup>3</sup> The PBO budget is approximately \$2.7 million (USD).

strong culture of control and secrecy in the federal government and a relatively weak culture of open debate underpinned by analysis in Parliament.

PBO has obtained a legal opinion on the scope and impact of the legislated information provision (S79.3 (1)). Recent conversations with senior public service officials have suggested opportunities to strengthen the relationship, borrowing from experiences with the Office of the Auditor General (although the role and mandate between the PBO and OAG are fundamentally different).

## **Operating Model**

Like other legislative budget offices, PBO has adopted an open and transparent operating model to promote value, accountability and non-partisanship. Given a limited budget, this operating model has promoted value by leveraging assistance from external experts. It promotes accountability and debate because PBO products are made available to all parliamentarians and Canadians. With four major political parties in Canada's Parliament (Conservative, Liberal, Bloc Québécois, and New Democratic), a transparent model helps promote non-partisan behaviour. Notwithstanding the obvious benefits of an open and transparent model, the PBO approach came under criticism from within the bureaucracy of the Library of Parliament and with some parliamentarians.

### *Publishing of Analysis*

PBO's operating model is a publishing model. PBO products are generally released on its Web site ([www.parl.gc.ca/pbo-dpb](http://www.parl.gc.ca/pbo-dpb)). The ongoing workplan reflects requests from Committees, individual Senators and members of Parliament and projects deemed a priority by the Parliamentary Budget Officer. Priorities are established with respect to a limited budget (planned budget of \$2.8 million in 2010-11). With respect to triage, two perspectives are used to rank potential projects. The first perspective ranks Committee requests (deemed mandatory if within the mandate of the PBO) above the requests of individual parliamentarians. The second perspective assesses risk and materiality from a fiscal framework perspective.

PBO has three analytical priorities for 2009 and 2010 - support for parliamentarians and Canadians with analysis regarding: the economic recovery and budget (fiscal stimulus) implementation; fiscal sustainability; and financial analysis on key policy issues.

The terms of reference of a project, including the approach to product release, are discussed with the requester during the initial stage of product development. On requested projects, parliamentarians are briefed prior to media and others and the posting of analysis on the PBO Web site. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has been a regular witness at Committees, particularly the Standing Committee on Finance of the House of Commons. Indeed, a motion was passed in 2009 at the aforementioned Committee to



have the Parliamentary Budget Officer before the Committee within a few weeks of the release of a quarterly budget implementation report by the government.

### *Organization, Products and Budget*

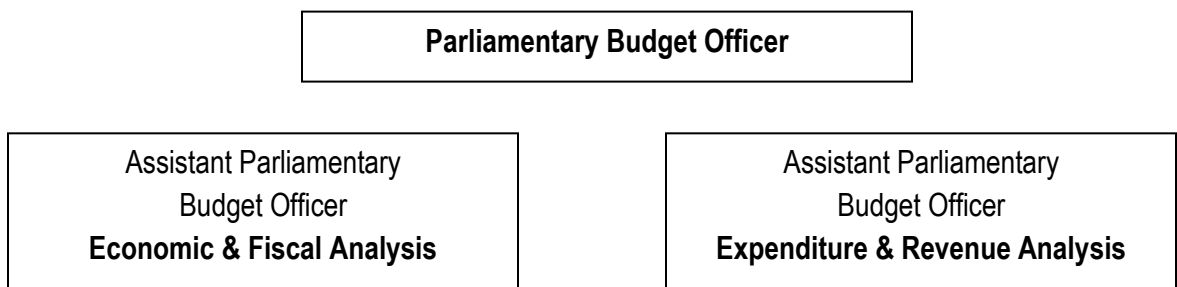
Reflecting the legislative mandate and the different nature of the skills sets, PBO is divided into two divisions (see chart below), each currently headed by an Assistant Parliamentary Budget Officer with significant experience in the federal budget process in Canada.

The Economic and Fiscal Analysis Division is responsible for preparing analysis on economic trends and the nation's finances. Over the past year, this has included model based economic and fiscal projections (short- and medium-term), analysis of evolving economic conditions and estimates of structural fiscal balances and long-term fiscal sustainability. The division is staffed with economists with many years of cumulative experience working with economic models in a projection environment including experience at the Department of Finance, Bank of Canada and the Canada Revenue Agency. The education background of the officers includes graduate degrees in economics at the Master and Doctorate levels.

The Revenue and Expenditure Analysis Division is responsible for preparing analysis on costing of proposals and the estimates (i.e., appropriations). Over the past year, this has included policy costing involving Canada's engagement in Afghanistan and Aboriginal education infrastructure.

These long-term projects involved peer review panels with experts across Canada and the US. A number of analytical papers were prepared to analyze the potential costs for Private Member Bills. Quarterly assessments of budget implementation reports and analysis of infrastructure spending were made available to parliamentarians and Canadians. The division is staffed with financial analysts with public and private sector experience with educational backgrounds including graduate level degrees in business, accounting, economics and financial analysis.

### **Structure and Budget**



<b>Planned</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>
Financial Resources	\$1.8 million (adjusted to \$2.4 million)	\$2.8 million
Human Resources	13	15

*Issues*

The three most controversial and debated issues with respect to the PBO operating model have involved the application of the principles of transparency and independence, the focus on high priority issues and organizational relativities involving competencies and experience of the staff of the PBO.

While transparency and independence are deemed to be fundamental features of a legislative budget office, and it is essential to promote quality analysis and the perception of non-partisanship, some parliamentarians argued that the PBO approach can usurp the role of parliamentarians. These parliamentarians wanted the work of the PBO to be carried in a similar fashion to other parts of the Library which provide confidential research services. In the view of the PBO, it is the role of parliamentarians to hold the government to account, not the PBO. PBO provides financial analysis, not public policy analysis. Given the small budget of the PBO and the challenges in obtaining access to data and external experts necessary to provide quality analysis, the PBO discusses product release and confidentiality at the outset of a project. In the PBO view, parliamentarians work for Canadians. PBO works for parliamentarians and Canadians.

The profile of the PBO over the past two years has been enhanced by changing economic and fiscal conditions in Canada and its focus on key issues (e.g., the costing of Canada's engagement in Afghanistan, fiscal sustainability, etc). Some parliamentarians expressed dissatisfaction with the media profile afforded to the work of the PBO. Like other countries, the world recession has had a significant impact on Canada's economy and fiscal outlook. The uncertainty and the corresponding demand by opposition parties for independent analysis underscored the value proposition of a legislative budget office in Canada. The media has systematically followed the work of the PBO, both through committee appearances and the release of analysis on the PBO Web site. Efforts by PBO to promote fiscal transparency were broadly and consistently supported by the media.

Given the broad legislative mandate and relatively modest budget, PBO has strategically sought out the services of experienced budget experts in key subject areas. Many of these experts have occupied positions at the management levels in central budget agencies. This has created the perception that the PBO is a "top-heavy" organization with respect to salaries, particularly in the context of researchers in the Library of Parliament. However, from a relativity perspective, the current PBO human resource structure is very similar to structures at budget central agencies and has been reviewed by an independent consultant. After two years of operation, the PBO is still awaiting approval of its human resource structure.

## The Experience – The First Two Years

The experience of the first two years at PBO can be broken down into three overlapping periods:

- the first year (2008) involving the establishment of the operating model and office structure and the development and the release of initial products on the cost of the Afghanistan engagement and the first PBO economic and fiscal outlook;
- a period of adjustment in 2009 involving a review by the Joint Committee of the Library of Parliament on PBO operations; and
- a period of progression in which PBO moved forward on analysis with broader support from parliamentarians and public, and saw the return of its original planned budget

### *Establishment and Implementation*

The Parliamentary Budget Officer was appointed on March 25, 2008. After some initial introductory appearances at named committees focussed on professional background and the mandate, senior officials in the PBO consulted broadly on its operating model with parliamentarians and outside experts including the Congressional Budget Office. During the late spring, PBO received its first request to undertake a policy costing of Canada's engagement in Afghanistan. In the early fall, prior to the call for a fall federal election, PBO circulated its proposed operating model to parliamentarians.

During the federal election, PBO released its fiscal impact study on the Afghanistan engagement after all party leaders indicated their support for the PBO to do so. This was a controversial juncture for the PBO – its first study and an unprecedented release during an election campaign when Parliament was dissolved. The study was released only because all leaders requested it to be released. Prior to a late fall economic and fiscal update by the Minister of Finance in 2008, PBO released its first economic and fiscal outlook highlighting the prospects for a recession in 2009 and federal budgetary deficits in Canada for the first time in more than a decade. The analysis was at odds with the projections of the Minister of Finance who argued at the time that deficits could be avoided in Canada in 2009-10.

### *Adjustment*

After a controversial start, PBO entered a period of adjustment. Shortly after the release of the Afghanistan study, the Parliamentary Budget Officer received a letter from the Speaker of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Commons via the Parliamentary Librarian indicating that they did not support the PBO operating model and had concerns with the work of the PBO being at the centre of public debate. Shortly after the release of the PBO's economic and fiscal update in the fall of 2008, the PBO was informed via the Parliamentary Librarian that its planned budget for 2009-10 would be straight-lined at its 2008-09 start up level of \$1.8 million, instead of the planned budget of \$2.8 million – effectively a budget reduction of one-third from its planned levels.

Following concerns registered by some parliamentarians about the PBO budget reduction, the Joint Committee of the Library of Parliament undertook a review of the PBO operational model and budget. After consulting with some former parliamentarians and some current public servants on the spirit and intent of the *Accountability Act* regarding the PBO, it made a number of recommendations regarding the bureaucratic relationship involving the Library of Parliament and PBO. One of the recommendations indicated that, like the Library research model, all analytical products requested by parliamentarians would remain confidential until it was agreed by the Committee or parliamentarian to release the PBO analysis. Another recommendation indicated that the PBO budget should be returned to its planned level of \$2.8 million, if PBO followed the Joint Committee recommendations. The Joint Committee report received endorsement in the Senate but was not endorsed by the House of Commons.

PBO drafted a detailed action plan in response to the Joint Committee recommendations. With regard to the recommendation on confidentiality, PBO developed a protocol that involved early discussions with requesting parliamentarians on product release that would provide assurances necessary that PBO could work collaboratively with others to gain access to data and expertise without the issues associated with confidentiality restrictions.

During this difficult period of adjustment, PBO released a number of products on the evolving economic and fiscal situation and outlook; a framework for quarterly reporting and assessment on budget implementation following the introduction of a relatively large fiscal stimulus package in Budget 2009; analysis on the term sheets for loans to automobile companies; costing of Private Member Bills and potential budget proposals and a major policy costing of Aboriginal educational infrastructure.

### *Progression*

In the fall of 2009, support for the work of the PBO broadened including a petition from more than one hundred economists from across Canada as well as more public and vocal support from parliamentarians including leaders of opposition parties and finance critics. In the late fall of 2009, the Standing Committee on Finance of the House of Commons recommended in their pre-Budget 2010 consultation report that the Parliamentary Budget Officer be made an independent officer of Parliament and be adequately resourced. The Main Estimates for 2010-11 tabled in the House of Commons in March 2010 confirmed that the budget for the PBO in 2010-11 would be returned to its original planned level of \$2.8 million.

During this period of progression, the PBO released a number of products on the outlook; cyclically-adjusted budget balances; fiscal sustainability; infrastructure spending; costing of Private Member Bills and launched a major project on the costing of sentencing reform in Canada.

## Lessons Learned

The PBO received some early advice from different quarters that has served the organization well. From a Member of Parliament, the choice was framed in terms of paths - "useful or useless". PBO internalized this advice in terms of a mission that was "timely, relevant and authoritative". From a senior official of the Congressional Budget Office, three points of advice were advanced – "quality, communication and toughness". Progress in moving the PBO forward had to start from a quality of analysis vantage point. From a senior OECD official, it was noted that in establishing and implementing a new legislative budget office that "cement dries quickly". PBO internalized this advice as the need to remain vigilant in the operation of an open and transparent operating model that will promote debate and accountability.

The PBO has also learned some lessons from experience that underscores the need for legislatures to establish strong and clear foundations for their budget offices from the start. This includes legislation that provides for appropriate governance, operating principles and resourcing.

From the perspective of current Parliamentary Budget Officer, it is argued that:

- the next Parliamentary Budget Officer should be an independent budget authority appointed by Parliament and holds office during good behaviour (rather than at pleasure);
- the principle of transparency in the conduct and release of analysis should be enshrined in legislation; and
- resources provided should be commensurate with the mandate.

**ANNEX A****Excerpt – *Parliament of Canada Act*  
Parliamentary Budget Officer**Parliamentary Budget Officer

**79.1** (1) There is hereby established the position of Parliamentary Budget Officer, the holder of which is an officer of the Library of Parliament.

Appointment and term of office

(2) The Governor in Council shall, by commission under the Great Seal, appoint the Parliamentary Budget Officer to hold office during pleasure for a renewable term of not more than five years.

Selection

(3) The Governor in Council may select the Parliamentary Budget Officer from a list of three names submitted in confidence, through the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, by a committee formed and chaired by the Parliamentary Librarian.

Remuneration and expenses

(4) The Parliamentary Budget Officer shall be paid the remuneration and expenses set by the Governor in Council.

2006, c. 9, s. 116.

Mandate

**79.2** The mandate of the Parliamentary Budget Officer is to

- (a) provide independent analysis to the Senate and to the House of Commons about the state of the nation's finances, the estimates of the government and trends in the national economy;
- (b) when requested to do so by any of the following committees, undertake research for that committee into the nation's finances and economy:
  - (i) the Standing Committee on National Finance of the Senate or, in the event that there is not a Standing Committee on National Finance, the appropriate committee of the Senate,
  - (ii) the Standing Committee on Finance of the House of Commons or, in the event that there is not a Standing Committee on Finance, the appropriate committee of the House of Commons, or

(iii) the Standing Committee on Public Accounts of the House of Commons or, in the event that there is not a Standing Committee on Public Accounts, the appropriate committee of the House of Commons;

(c) when requested to do so by a committee of the Senate or of the House of Commons, or a committee of both Houses, that is mandated to consider the estimates of the government, undertake research for that committee into those estimates; and

(d) when requested to do so by a member of either House or by a committee of the Senate or of the House of Commons, or a committee of both Houses, estimate the financial cost of any proposal that relates to a matter over which Parliament has jurisdiction.

2006, c. 9, s. 116.

#### Access to financial and economic data

**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.

#### Exception

(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).

2006, c. 9, s. 116.

#### Confidentiality

**79.4** The Parliamentary Budget Officer, and every person acting on behalf or under the direction of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, shall not disclose any financial or economic data that come to their knowledge under section 79.3, unless the disclosure is essential for the performance of his or her mandate and the financial or economic data to which the disclosure relates are not information described in subsection 13(1), section 14, any of paragraphs 18(a) to (d), section 18.1, any of paragraphs 20(1)(b) to (d) or section 20.1 of the *Access to Information Act*.

2006, c. 9, ss. 116, 117.

Powers to contract

**79.5** (1) The Parliamentary Budget Officer may, in the performance of his or her mandate, enter into contracts, memoranda of understanding or other arrangements in the name of his or her position.

Technical assistance

(2) The Parliamentary Budget Officer may engage on a temporary basis the services of persons having technical or specialized knowledge necessary for the performance of his or her mandate.

Authorization to assist

(3) The Parliamentary Budget Officer may authorize a person employed in the Library of Parliament to assist him or her to exercise any of the powers under subsection (1) or (2), subject to the conditions that the Parliamentary Budget Officer sets.

Clarification

(4) For greater certainty, section 74 and subsection 75(2) apply in respect of the exercise of the powers described in subsections (1) to (3).

2006, c. 9, s. 116.