



## PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICE

NSW Parliament • Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney 2000

# MEDIA RELEASE

## Correction of Misrepresentation

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Parliamentary Budget Officer wishes to correct a misrepresentation of a PBO costing.

On Wednesday 22 March the PBO's attention was drawn to a social media tile distributed by the Liberal Party NSW Division saying "Labor have cut more than \$2 billion from the WestInvest Fund. Source: Parliamentary Budget Office"

The PBO has costed a number of ALP election promises that propose projects to be funded from the WestInvest Fund with a neutral impact on the budget bottom line. The PBO costings confirmed this assumption is feasible because there are sufficient funds available.

In total, this will require changes involving some previously announced projects. The PBO considers this feasible where there is no legal obligation committing the government to those projects.

An alternative government – or indeed a re-elected government - would be able to put in place processes to discontinue, change timing, or alter the scope of projects announced to be funded from WestInvest where there is no legal obligation to proceed.

The PBO has pointed out to the Liberal Party that a government announcement is not a legally binding commitment.

None of this makes it accurate to say "Labor have cut more than \$2 billion from the WestInvest Fund". To state the Fund would be cut is a misrepresentation. The ALP's proposals would mean a reallocation of priorities within WestInvest, not a cut to the Fund.

It is also a misrepresentation for the Liberal Party to quote the PBO as the source of this claim.

The PBO contacted the Liberal Party at 1.45pm on 22 March 2023 suggesting the misrepresentation be corrected. The PBO has not received advice from the Liberal Party that a correction will be issued.

Under the *Parliamentary Budget Officer Act 2010* (section 22(3)) "If the Parliamentary Budget Officer considers that an election policy costing provided by the Officer has been publicly misrepresented, the Officer may issue a public statement to correct the misrepresentation."

### For queries please contact the PBO:

- [BudgetOffice@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:BudgetOffice@parliament.nsw.gov.au) or phone 9230 2400; or
- Stephen Bartos, the Parliamentary Budget Officer 0456 447 624, email [Stephen.bartos@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Stephen.bartos@parliament.nsw.gov.au).