

1996

The Parliament of the  
Commonwealth of Australia

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Presented and read a first time*

## **Charter of Budget Honesty Bill 1996**

**No. , 1996**

*(Treasury)*

**A Bill for an Act to provide for a Charter of Budget  
Honesty**

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## Contents

1	Short title.....	1
2	Commencement .....	1
3	The Charter of Budget Honesty .....	2
<b>Schedule 1—Charter of Budget Honesty</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>Part 1—Purpose and overview</b>		<b>3</b>
1	Purpose of Charter of Budget Honesty .....	3
2	Overview of obligations.....	3
<b>Part 2—Interpretation</b>		<b>5</b>
3	Interpretation.....	5
<b>Part 3—Principles of sound fiscal management</b>		<b>7</b>
4	Formulation of Government fiscal policy.....	7
5	The principles of sound fiscal management.....	7
<b>Part 4—Fiscal strategy statement</b>		<b>9</b>
6	Public release and tabling of fiscal strategy statements.....	9
7	Purpose of fiscal strategy statements .....	9
8	Fiscal strategy statement to be based on principles of sound fiscal management .....	9
9	Contents of fiscal strategy statement .....	10
<b>Part 5—Annual Government reporting</b>		<b>11</b>
<b>Division 1—Budget economic and fiscal outlook report</b>		<b>11</b>
10	Public release and tabling of budget economic and fiscal outlook reports .....	11
11	Purpose of budget economic and fiscal outlook reports .....	11
12	Contents of budget economic and fiscal outlook report .....	11
13	Commonwealth bodies to provide information to help prepare report.....	12
<b>Division 2—Mid-year economic and fiscal outlook report</b>		<b>13</b>
14	Public release and tabling of mid-year economic and fiscal outlook reports .....	13
15	Purpose of mid-year economic and fiscal outlook reports.....	13
16	Contents of mid-year economic and fiscal outlook report.....	13

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17	Commonwealth bodies to provide information to help prepare report.....	14
<b>Division 3—Final budget outcome report</b>		<b>15</b>
18	Public release and tabling of final budget outcome reports.....	15
19	Contents of final budget outcome report .....	15
<b>Part 6—Intergenerational report</b>		<b>16</b>
20	Public release and tabling of intergenerational reports.....	16
21	Contents of intergenerational report .....	16
<b>Part 7—Pre-election economic and fiscal outlook report</b>		<b>17</b>
22	Public release of pre-election economic and fiscal outlook report.....	17
23	Purpose of pre-election economic and fiscal outlook reports.....	17
24	Contents of pre-election economic and fiscal outlook report—economic and fiscal information .....	17
25	Contents of pre-election economic and fiscal outlook report—statements by responsible Ministers and responsible Secretaries .....	18
26	Division of responsibility between responsible Secretaries.....	19
27	Responsible Minister to provide information to help prepare report.....	20
28	Commonwealth bodies to provide information to help prepare report.....	20
<b>Part 8—Costing of election commitments</b>		<b>22</b>
29	Requests for costing of election commitments .....	22
30	How policy costings are to be prepared.....	23
31	Public release of policy costings.....	23
32	Commonwealth bodies to provide information to help prepare report.....	24

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1 **A Bill for an Act to provide for a Charter of Budget**  
2 **Honesty**

3 **The Parliament of Australia enacts:**

4 **1 Short title**

5 This Act may be cited as the *Charter of Budget Honesty Act 1996*.

6 **2 Commencement**

7 This Act commences on the day on which it receives the Royal  
8 Assent.

Section 3

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1 **3 The Charter of Budget Honesty**

2 (1) The Charter of Budget Honesty is set out in Schedule 1.

3 (2) Nothing in the Charter of Budget Honesty creates rights or duties  
4 that are enforceable in judicial or other proceedings.

1 **Schedule 1—Charter of Budget Honesty**

2 Note: See section 3.

3 **Part 1—Purpose and overview**

5 **1 Purpose of Charter of Budget Honesty**

6 The Charter of Budget Honesty provides a framework for the  
7 conduct of Government fiscal policy. The purpose of the Charter is  
8 to improve fiscal policy outcomes. The Charter provides for this by  
9 requiring fiscal strategy to be based on principles of sound fiscal  
10 management and by facilitating public scrutiny of fiscal policy and  
11 performance.

12 **2 Overview of obligations**

13 *Principles of sound fiscal management*

- 14 (1) The Government's fiscal strategy is to be based on the principles  
15 of sound fiscal management (see Part 3).

16 *Fiscal strategy statements*

- 17 (2) The Government's fiscal strategy is to be set out in a fiscal strategy  
18 statement publicly released and tabled by the Treasurer with each  
19 budget (see Part 4).

20 Note 1: The first fiscal strategy statement for a particular Government may be  
21 publicly released and tabled before its first budget.

22 Note 2: A particular Government may publicly release and table a new fiscal  
23 strategy statement at any time.

24 *Regular fiscal reporting*

- 25 (3) The Treasurer is to publicly release and table regular fiscal reports  
26 as follows:

## Schedule 1 Charter of Budget Honesty

### Part 1 Purpose and overview

#### Clause 2

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- 1 (a) there is to be a budget economic and fiscal outlook report  
2 with each budget (see Division 1 of Part 5);  
3 (b) there is to be a mid-year economic and fiscal outlook report  
4 by the end of January in each year or within 6 months after  
5 the last budget, whichever is later (see Division 2 of Part 5);  
6 (c) there is to be a final budget outcome report within 3 months  
7 of the end of each financial year (see Division 3 of Part 5).

#### *Intergenerational reports*

- 8  
9 (4) The Treasurer is to publicly release and table an intergenerational  
10 report at least once every 5 years (see Part 6).

#### *General elections—pre-election report*

- 11  
12 (5) The Secretaries to the Departments of the Treasury and Finance are  
13 to publicly release a pre-election fiscal and economic outlook  
14 report if a general election is called (see Part 7).

#### *General elections—policy costings*

- 15  
16 (6) The Government, or the Opposition (if the Prime Minister agrees  
17 to refer the request), may ask the Secretaries to the Departments of  
18 the Treasury and Finance to prepare a costing of any of its publicly  
19 announced policies if a general election is called. The costing will  
20 then be publicly released (see Part 8).



1  
2 **Part 2—Interpretation**  
3

4 **3 Interpretation**

5 (1) In this Schedule, unless the contrary intention appears:

6 *budget* means an annual Commonwealth budget.

7 *budget year* means the financial year to which a budget relates.

8 *caretaker period* means, in relation to a general election, the  
9 period starting with the issue of the writ for the election and ending  
10 at the close of the poll on the polling day for the election.

11 *Commonwealth body* means a Department or other entity that is  
12 within the Commonwealth general government sector.

13 *external reporting standards* means:

- 14 (a) the concepts and classifications set out in GFS Australia; and  
15 (b) public sector accounting standards developed by the Public  
16 Sector Accounting Standards Board.

17 *general election* means a general election of the members of the  
18 House of Representatives.

19 *GFS Australia* means the publication of the Australian Bureau of  
20 Statistics known as Government Finance Statistics Australia:  
21 Concepts, Sources and Methods, as updated from time to time.  
22 This updating takes 2 forms:

- 23 (a) from time to time, a new version of the publication is  
24 produced;  
25 (b) from time to time, material in the current version of the  
26 publication is updated by other publications of the Australian  
27 Bureau of Statistics.

28 *Government* means the Commonwealth Government.

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**Schedule 1 Charter of Budget Honesty**  
**Part 2 Interpretation**

**Clause 3**

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1                    ***Leader of the Opposition*** means the Leader of the Opposition in  
2                    the House of Representatives.

3                    ***principles of sound fiscal management*** means the principles set  
4                    out in clause 5.

5                    ***responsible Ministers*** means the Treasurer and the Minister for  
6                    Finance.

7                    ***responsible Secretaries*** means the Secretary to the Department of  
8                    the Treasury and the Secretary to the Department of Finance.

9                    ***table*** means table in each House of the Parliament.

10                    (2) Other expressions used in this Act that are given a meaning by  
11                    GFS Australia have the meanings so given.

1  
2 **Part 3—Principles of sound fiscal management**  
3

4 **4 Formulation of Government fiscal policy**

- 5 (1) The Government's fiscal policy is to be directed at maintaining the  
6 on-going economic prosperity and welfare of the people of  
7 Australia and is therefore to be set in a sustainable medium-term  
8 framework.
- 9 (2) To meet this objective, the Government's fiscal strategy is to be  
10 based on the principles of sound fiscal management.

11 **5 The principles of sound fiscal management**

- 12 (1) The principles of sound fiscal management are that the  
13 Government is to:
- 14 (a) manage financial risks faced by the Commonwealth  
15 prudently, having regard to economic circumstances,  
16 including by maintaining Commonwealth general  
17 government debt at prudent levels; and
- 18 (b) ensure that its fiscal policy contributes:
- 19 (i) to achieving adequate national saving; and  
20 (ii) to moderating cyclical fluctuations in economic activity,  
21 as appropriate, taking account of the economic risks  
22 facing the nation and the impact of those risks on the  
23 Government's fiscal position; and
- 24 (c) pursue spending and taxing policies that are consistent with a  
25 reasonable degree of stability and predictability in the level  
26 of the tax burden; and
- 27 (d) maintain the integrity of the tax system; and  
28 (e) ensure that its policy decisions have regard to their financial  
29 effects on future generations.

**Schedule 1 Charter of Budget Honesty**  
**Part 3 Principles of sound fiscal management**

**Clause 5**

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- 1           (2) The financial risks referred to in paragraph (1)(a) include risks  
2           such as:
- 3           (a) risks arising from excessive net debt; and
  - 4           (b) commercial risks arising from ownership of public trading  
5           enterprises and public financial enterprises; and
  - 6           (c) risks arising from erosion of the tax base; and
  - 7           (d) risks arising from the management of assets and liabilities.

1  
2 **Part 4—Fiscal strategy statement**  
3

4 **6 Public release and tabling of fiscal strategy statements**

- 5 (1) The Treasurer is to publicly release and table the first fiscal  
6 strategy statement for a particular Government at or before the  
7 time of the Government's first budget.
- 8 (2) The Treasurer is to publicly release and table a fiscal strategy  
9 statement for the Government at the time of each of the  
10 Government's subsequent budgets.
- 11 (3) If the Government wants to change its fiscal strategy statement, it  
12 may do so at any time by the Treasurer publicly releasing and  
13 tabling a new fiscal strategy statement.
- 14 (4) If a House of the Parliament is not sitting when a fiscal strategy  
15 statement is publicly released:  
16 (a) the statement still takes effect from its public release; and  
17 (b) the Treasurer is to table the statement in that House of the  
18 Parliament as soon as practicable after it next sits.

19 **7 Purpose of fiscal strategy statements**

20 The purpose of fiscal strategy statements is to increase public  
21 awareness of the Government's fiscal strategy and to establish a  
22 benchmark for evaluating the Government's conduct of fiscal  
23 policy.

24 **8 Fiscal strategy statement to be based on principles of sound fiscal**  
25 **management**

26 A fiscal strategy statement is to be based on the principles of sound  
27 fiscal management.

Clause 9

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1       **9 Contents of fiscal strategy statement**

- 2               (1) A fiscal strategy statement is to:
- 3                   (a) specify the Government's long-term fiscal objectives within
- 4                   which shorter-term fiscal policy will be framed; and
- 5                   (b) explain the broad strategic priorities on which the budget is
- 6                   or will be based; and
- 7                   (c) specify the key fiscal measures that the Government
- 8                   considers important and against which fiscal policy will be
- 9                   set and assessed; and
- 10                  (d) specify, for the budget year and the following 3 financial
- 11                  years:
- 12                   (i) the Government's fiscal objectives and targets; and
- 13                   (ii) the expected outcomes for the specified key fiscal
- 14                   measures; and
- 15                  (e) explain how the fiscal objectives and strategic priorities
- 16                  specified and explained as required by paragraphs (a), (b)
- 17                  and (d) relate to the principles of sound fiscal management;
- 18                  and
- 19                  (f) specify fiscal policy actions taken or to be taken by the
- 20                  Government that are temporary in nature, adopted for the
- 21                  purpose of moderating cyclical fluctuations in economic
- 22                  activity, and indicate the process for their reversal; and
- 23                  (g) explain broadly the reporting basis on which subsequent
- 24                  Government fiscal reports will be prepared.
- 25               (2) If particular information required to be included in the statement is
- 26               unchanged from information set out in full in an earlier statement,
- 27               the statement may instead summarise the information and state that
- 28               it is unchanged from what was set out in the earlier statement.

1

2 **Part 5—Annual Government reporting**

3 **Division 1—Budget economic and fiscal outlook report**

4 **10 Public release and tabling of budget economic and fiscal outlook**  
5 **reports**

6 The Treasurer is to publicly release and table a budget economic  
7 and fiscal outlook report at the time of each budget.

8 **11 Purpose of budget economic and fiscal outlook reports**

9 The purpose of budget economic and fiscal outlook reports is to  
10 provide information to allow the assessment of the Government's  
11 fiscal performance against the fiscal strategy set out in its current  
12 fiscal strategy statement.

13 **12 Contents of budget economic and fiscal outlook report**

- 14 (1) A budget economic and fiscal outlook report is to contain the  
15 following information:
- 16 (a) Commonwealth budget sector and Commonwealth general  
17 government sector fiscal estimates for the budget year and  
18 the following 3 financial years;
  - 19 (b) the economic and other assumptions for the budget year and  
20 the following 3 financial years that have been used in  
21 preparing those fiscal estimates;
  - 22 (c) discussion of the sensitivity of those fiscal estimates to  
23 changes in those economic and other assumptions;
  - 24 (d) an overview of the estimated tax expenditures for the budget  
25 year and the following 3 financial years;
  - 26 (e) a statement of the risks, quantified where feasible, that may  
27 have a material effect on the fiscal outlook, including:  
28 (i) contingent liabilities; and
-

**Schedule 1** Charter of Budget Honesty

**Part 5** Annual Government reporting

**Division 1** Budget economic and fiscal outlook report

**Clause 13**

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1 (ii) publicly announced Government commitments that are  
2 not yet included in the fiscal estimates referred to in  
3 paragraph (a); and

4 (iii) Government negotiations that have yet to be finalised.

5 (2) The information in the report is to take into account, to the fullest  
6 extent possible, all Government decisions and all other  
7 circumstances that may have a material effect on the fiscal and  
8 economic outlook.

9 (3) The report is to:

10 (a) be based on external reporting standards; and

11 (b) identify, in general terms, the external reporting standards on  
12 which it is based and any ways in which the report departs  
13 from those standards.

14 (4) The report does not have to include information that the Treasurer  
15 considers should not be included because:

16 (a) it is confidential commercial information; or

17 (b) its disclosure in the report could prejudice national security.

18 **13 Commonwealth bodies to provide information to help prepare**  
19 **report**

20 (1) To help the Treasurer to prepare a budget economic and fiscal  
21 outlook report, the Treasurer may request a Commonwealth body  
22 to provide information.

23 (2) A Commonwealth body is to comply with a request in time to  
24 allow the information to be taken into account in the preparation of  
25 the report, unless it is not practicable for the body to do so. The  
26 body does not have to provide information if doing so would  
27 contravene another law of the Commonwealth.



1  
2 **Division 2—Mid-year economic and fiscal outlook report**

3 **14 Public release and tabling of mid-year economic and fiscal**  
4 **outlook reports**

5 (1) The Treasurer is to publicly release and table a mid-year economic  
6 and fiscal outlook report by the end of January in each year, or  
7 within 6 months after the last budget, whichever is later.

8 (2) If:

9 (a) a mid-year economic and fiscal outlook report is publicly  
10 released by the end of the period specified in subclause (1);  
11 but

12 (b) a House of the Parliament is not sitting when the report is  
13 released;

14 the report does not have to be tabled in that House until it next sits  
15 (or as soon as practicable after then), even if that is after the end of  
16 the specified period.

17 **15 Purpose of mid-year economic and fiscal outlook reports**

18 The purpose of mid-year economic and fiscal outlook reports is to  
19 provide updated information to allow the assessment of the  
20 Government's fiscal performance against the fiscal strategy set out  
21 in its current fiscal strategy statement.

22 **16 Contents of mid-year economic and fiscal outlook report**

23 (1) A mid-year economic and fiscal outlook report is to:

24 (a) update key information contained in the most recent budget  
25 economic and fiscal outlook report (the *budget report*); and

26 (b) contain a detailed statement of tax expenditures, presenting  
27 disaggregated information on tax expenditures.

**Schedule 1** Charter of Budget Honesty

**Part 5** Annual Government reporting

**Division 2** Mid-year economic and fiscal outlook report

**Clause 17**

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- 1                   (2) The information in the report is to take into account, to the fullest  
2                   extent possible, all Government decisions and all other  
3                   circumstances that may have a material effect on the fiscal and  
4                   economic outlook.
- 5                   (3) The report is to:  
6                   (a) be based on external reporting standards; and  
7                   (b) identify, in general terms, the external reporting standards on  
8                   which it is based and any ways in which the report departs  
9                   from those standards.
- 10                  (4) If particular information required to be included in the report is  
11                  unchanged from information set out in full in the budget report, the  
12                  report may instead summarise the information and state that it is  
13                  unchanged from what was set out in the budget report.
- 14                  (5) The report does not have to include information that the Treasurer  
15                  considers should not be included because:  
16                  (a) it is confidential commercial information; or  
17                  (b) its disclosure in the report could prejudice national security.

18                  **17 Commonwealth bodies to provide information to help prepare**  
19                  **report**

- 20                  (1) To help the Treasurer to prepare a mid-year economic and fiscal  
21                  outlook report, the Treasurer may request a Commonwealth body  
22                  to provide information.
- 23                  (2) A Commonwealth body is to comply with a request in time to  
24                  allow the information to be taken into account in the preparation of  
25                  the report, unless it is not practicable for the body to do so. The  
26                  body does not have to provide information if doing so would  
27                  contravene another law of the Commonwealth.

1  
2 **Division 3—Final budget outcome report**

3 **18 Public release and tabling of final budget outcome reports**

- 4 (1) The Treasurer is to publicly release and table a final budget  
5 outcome report for each financial year no later than 3 months after  
6 the end of the financial year.
- 7 (2) If:
- 8 (a) a final budget outcome report is publicly released within 3  
9 months after the end of the financial year; but
- 10 (b) a House of the Parliament is not sitting when the report is  
11 released;
- 12 the report does not have to be tabled in that House until it next sits  
13 (or as soon as practicable after then), even if that is after the end of  
14 that 3 months.
- 15 (3) The final budget outcome report for a financial year may be  
16 incorporated in the budget economic and fiscal outlook report for  
17 the next financial year if the next financial year's budget is brought  
18 down after the start of that year.

19 **19 Contents of final budget outcome report**

- 20 (1) A final budget outcome report is to contain Commonwealth budget  
21 sector and Commonwealth general government sector fiscal  
22 outcomes for the financial year.
- 23 (2) The report is to:
- 24 (a) be based on external reporting standards; and
- 25 (b) identify, in general terms, the external reporting standards on  
26 which it is based and any ways in which the report departs  
27 from those standards.

Clause 20

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1  
2 **Part 6—Intergenerational report**  
3

4 **20 Public release and tabling of intergenerational reports**

5 (1) The Treasurer is to publicly release and table intergenerational  
6 reports as follows:

- 7 (a) the first intergenerational report is to be publicly released and  
8 tabled within 5 years after the commencement of this Act;  
9 (b) subsequent intergenerational reports are to be publicly  
10 released and tabled within 5 years of the public release of the  
11 preceding report.

12 (2) If:

- 13 (a) an intergenerational report is publicly released within the  
14 period specified in subclause (1); but  
15 (b) a House of the Parliament is not sitting when the report is  
16 released;

17 the report does not have to be tabled in that House until it next sits  
18 (or as soon as practicable after then), even if that is after the end of  
19 the specified period.

20 **21 Contents of intergenerational report**

21 An intergenerational report is to assess the long term sustainability  
22 of current Government policies over the 40 years following the  
23 release of the report, including by taking account of the financial  
24 implications of demographic change.

1  
2 **Part 7—Pre-election economic and fiscal outlook**  
3 **report**  
4

5 **22 Public release of pre-election economic and fiscal outlook report**

6 The responsible Secretaries are, jointly, to publicly release a  
7 pre-election economic and fiscal outlook report within 10 days of  
8 the issue of the writ for a general election.

9 **23 Purpose of pre-election economic and fiscal outlook reports**

10 The purpose of pre-election economic and fiscal outlook reports is  
11 to provide updated information on the economic and fiscal  
12 outlook.

13 **24 Contents of pre-election economic and fiscal outlook report—**  
14 **economic and fiscal information**

- 15 (1) A pre-election economic and fiscal outlook report is to contain the  
16 following information:
- 17 (a) updated Commonwealth budget sector and Commonwealth  
18 general government sector fiscal estimates for the current  
19 financial year and the following 3 financial years;
  - 20 (b) the economic and other assumptions for the current financial  
21 year and the following 3 financial years that have been used  
22 in preparing those updated fiscal estimates;
  - 23 (c) discussion as to the sensitivity of those updated fiscal  
24 estimates to changes in those economic and other  
25 assumptions;
  - 26 (d) an updated statement of the risks, quantified where feasible,  
27 that may have a material effect on the fiscal outlook,  
28 including:
    - 29 (i) contingent liabilities; and
-

Clause 25

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- 1 (ii) publicly announced Government commitments that are  
2 not yet included in the fiscal estimates referred to in  
3 paragraph (a); and  
4 (iii) Government negotiations that have yet to be finalised.
- 5 (2) The information in the report is to take into account, to the fullest  
6 extent possible, all Government decisions, and all other  
7 circumstances, that:  
8 (a) may have a material effect on the fiscal and economic  
9 outlook; and  
10 (b) were made, or were in existence, before the issue of the writ  
11 for the general election.
- 12 (3) The report is to:  
13 (a) be based on external reporting standards; and  
14 (b) identify, in general terms, the external reporting standards on  
15 which it is based and any ways in which the report departs  
16 from those standards.
- 17 (4) If particular information required to be included in the report is  
18 unchanged from information set out in full in an earlier budget  
19 economic and fiscal outlook report or mid-year economic and  
20 fiscal outlook report, the report may instead summarise the  
21 information and state that it is unchanged from what was set out in  
22 the earlier report.
- 23 (5) The report does not have to include information that the  
24 responsible Secretaries consider should not be included because:  
25 (a) it is confidential commercial information; or  
26 (b) its disclosure in the report could prejudice national security.

27 **25 Contents of pre-election economic and fiscal outlook report—**  
28 **statements by responsible Ministers and responsible**  
29 **Secretaries**

30 A pre-election economic and fiscal outlook report is to contain the  
31 following signed statements:

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- 1 (a) a statement, signed by the responsible Ministers, to the effect  
2 that the disclosure requirements of clause 27 have been  
3 complied with;
- 4 (b) a statement signed by the Secretary to the Department of the  
5 Treasury to the effect that, to the fullest extent possible, the  
6 information in the report for which the Secretary is  
7 responsible:
- 8 (i) reflects the best professional judgment of officers of  
9 that Department; and
- 10 (ii) takes into account all economic and fiscal information  
11 available; and
- 12 (iii) incorporates the fiscal implications of Government  
13 decisions and circumstances disclosed by the  
14 responsible Ministers;
- 15 (c) a statement signed by the Secretary to the Department of  
16 Finance to the effect that, to the fullest extent possible, the  
17 information in the report for which the Secretary is  
18 responsible:
- 19 (i) reflects the best professional judgment of officers of  
20 that Department; and
- 21 (ii) takes into account all economic information provided  
22 by the Department of the Treasury and all fiscal  
23 information available; and
- 24 (iii) incorporates the fiscal implications of Government  
25 decisions and circumstances disclosed by the  
26 responsible Ministers.

## 27 **26 Division of responsibility between responsible Secretaries**

28 In preparing a pre-election fiscal and economic outlook report:

- 29 (a) the Secretary to the Department of the Treasury is  
30 responsible for:
- 31 (i) revenue estimates included in the fiscal estimates  
32 required by paragraph 24(1)(a); and
- 33 (ii) the information required by paragraph 24(1)(b); and
-

**Schedule 1** Charter of Budget Honesty

**Part 7** Pre-election economic and fiscal outlook report

**Clause 27**

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- 1 (iii) the information required by paragraph 24(1)(c), so far  
2 as it relates to the revenue estimates; and  
3 (iv) the information required by paragraph 24(1)(d); and  
4 (v) the information required by paragraph 24(1)(e), so far  
5 as it relates to risks to revenue or tax expenditures; and  
6 (b) the Secretary to the Department of Finance is responsible for:  
7 (i) outlays or expenses estimates included in the fiscal  
8 estimates required by paragraph 24(1)(a); and  
9 (ii) the information required by paragraph 24(1)(c), so far  
10 as it relates to the outlays or expenses estimates; and  
11 (iii) the information required by paragraph 24(1)(e), so far  
12 as it relates to risks to outlays or expenses.

13 **27 Responsible Minister to provide information to help prepare**  
14 **report**

- 15 (1) To help the responsible Secretaries to prepare a pre-election  
16 economic and fiscal outlook report, each of the responsible  
17 Ministers is to disclose to either or both of the responsible  
18 Secretaries details of any Government decision, or any other  
19 circumstance, that the Minister knows about:  
20 (a) that has, or could have, material fiscal or economic  
21 implications; and  
22 (b) that neither of the responsible Secretaries could reasonably  
23 be expected to know about.  
24 (2) Disclosures are to be made within 2 days of the issue of the writ  
25 for the general election.

26 **28 Commonwealth bodies to provide information to help prepare**  
27 **report**

- 28 (1) To help a responsible Secretary to prepare aspects of a pre-election  
29 economic and fiscal outlook report for which he or she is  
30 responsible, he or she may request a Commonwealth body to  
31 provide information.



- 1           (2) A Commonwealth body is to comply with a request in time to  
2           allow the information to be taken into account in the preparation of  
3           the report, unless it is not practicable for the body to do so. The  
4           body does not have to provide information if doing so would  
5           contravene another law of the Commonwealth.

Clause 29

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1  
2 **Part 8—Costing of election commitments**  
3

4 **29 Requests for costing of election commitments**

- 5 (1) During the caretaker period for a general election:  
6 (a) the Prime Minister may request the responsible Secretaries to  
7 prepare costings of publicly announced Government policies;  
8 and  
9 (b) the Leader of the Opposition may, subject to subclause (4),  
10 request the responsible Secretaries to prepare costings of  
11 publicly announced Opposition policies.
- 12 (2) A request is to:  
13 (a) be in writing; and  
14 (b) outline fully the policy to be costed, giving relevant details;  
15 and  
16 (c) state the purpose or intention of the policy.
- 17 (3) A request by the Prime Minister is to be given to the responsible  
18 Secretaries.
- 19 (4) A request by the Leader of the Opposition is to be given to the  
20 Prime Minister, who may then agree to refer it to the responsible  
21 Secretaries. The responsible Secretaries are not obliged or  
22 authorised to take any action in relation to the request unless the  
23 Prime Minister has referred the request to them.
- 24 (5) The Prime Minister or the Leader of the Opposition may, at any  
25 time, withdraw a request that he or she has made. A withdrawal by  
26 the Prime Minister is to be by notice in writing given to the  
27 responsible Secretaries. A withdrawal by the Leader of the  
28 Opposition is to be by notice in writing given to the Prime  
29 Minister, who is to notify the responsible Secretaries of the  
30 withdrawal.

1     **30 How policy costings are to be prepared**

- 2             (1) The responsible Secretaries may, jointly, issue written guidelines  
3                 recommending approaches or methods to be used in the  
4                 preparation of policy costings.
- 5             (2) In preparing policy costings:
- 6                 (a) the Secretary to the Department of the Treasury is  
7                     responsible for costing aspects of policies affecting revenue;  
8                     and
- 9                 (b) the Secretary to the Department of Finance is responsible for  
10                     costing aspects of policies that affect government outlays and  
11                     expenses.
- 12             (3) If a responsible Secretary needs more information to cost aspects  
13                 of a policy, he or she is, in writing, to ask the Prime Minister or the  
14                 Leader of the Opposition (as the case requires) for that  
15                 information.

16     **31 Public release of policy costings**

- 17             (1) As soon as practicable after a policy costing request has been made  
18                 and before polling day for the election, either or both of the  
19                 responsible Secretaries are to publicly release a costing of the  
20                 policy.

21             Note 1:     Whether a costing has to be released by either or both of the  
22                             responsible Secretaries depends on the division of responsibilities set  
23                             out in subclause 30(2).

24             Note 2:     The obligation in this subclause does not apply to a request that has  
25                             been withdrawn under subclause 29(4).

- 26             (2) If a responsible Secretary does not have sufficient information, or  
27                 has not had sufficient time, to prepare and publicly release a policy  
28                 costing before polling day for the election, the Secretary is to  
29                 publicly release a statement to that effect before that day.
- 30             (3) A responsible Secretary is not obliged or authorised to take any  
31                 further action in relation to a policy costing request on or after  
32                 polling day for the election.
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Clause 32

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1 **32 Commonwealth bodies to provide information to help prepare**  
2 **report**

- 3 (1) To help a responsible Secretary to prepare aspects of a policy  
4 costing for which he or she is responsible, he or she may request a  
5 Commonwealth body to provide information.
- 6 (2) A Commonwealth body is to comply with a request in time to  
7 allow the information to be taken into account in the preparation of  
8 the policy costing, unless it is not practicable for the body to do so.  
9 The body does not have to provide information if doing so would  
10 contravene another law of the Commonwealth.

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