



The Hon Barry O'Farrell MP

Premier of NSW

Minister for Western Sydney

MEDIA RELEASE

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INQUIRY TO BE HELD INTO PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICE

A public inquiry will be held into the Parliamentary Budget Office to examine its future role and functions, NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell said today.

Mr O'Farrell said a Joint Select Committee would be asked to consider a range of issues around best practice, resourcing and oversight of the Office, which Labor failed to deliver on-time before the last election.

"The concept of having an independent process to cost election promises is a good one, but we have to ensure taxpayers are getting value for money," Mr O'Farrell said.

"This inquiry will look into the purpose of the Parliamentary Budget Office and whether the terms of the Act it is established under are appropriate.

"The Committee will also inquire into the Office's functions and powers, structure, staffing, resourcing and accountability and oversight mechanisms.

"Labor bungled the establishment of the Parliamentary Budget Office – it could not even fill the position of Parliamentary Budget Officer on time before the election.

"Under Labor's arrangements, the Office will cost taxpayers \$13 million over four years.

"It is appropriate that a Joint Select Committee conducts a full and open inquiry into whether the Office is in fact the best model for NSW for the purpose it is intended to serve.

"For example, is it in taxpayers' interest to have a full time, fully resourced Office to undertake tasks related to costing political parties' election promises every four years or is it desirable that the role be expanded so it serves a meaningful purpose outside of election periods?

"I want the Committee to conduct this inquiry with an open mind - the NSW Government has not made any decisions about the future of the Office and will be guided by the inquiry as to what steps it will take.

"I am determined to deliver a system that ensures taxpayers get the truth about election commitments to stop the sorts of rorts we saw with Labor election promises for 16 years."

The Committee will be chaired by the Member for Baulkham Hills, David Elliott MP, and comprise Members from both Houses.