

Cleaning Up Government - Background Information

Ministerial Staff

The number of Ministerial Staff has increased from 364 to 469.3 since 1996, or by almost 30 per cent. Including Opposition Staff, there are now 569.3 personal staff.

These figures include the Government Members Secretariat, which currently has 14 staff servicing Government backbenchers at an estimated annual cost of \$2 million per annum.

Reducing the number of staff by 30 per cent, would result in a saving of \$29 million per year.

This does not include any impact on minor parties and independent staffing levels.

2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
14.5	29	29	29

Liaison Officers

There are over 250 'parliamentary liaison officers' around Australia being paid for by Government Agencies, including Centrelink, Medicare and the Child Support Agency, but doing work for members of parliament.

Given the additional electorate officer allocated to every MP and Senator from 1 July 2007, Labor considers that the parliamentary liaison officers are no longer required - to provide support for politicians undertaking their electoral duties.

Slashing the parliamentary liaison officer programme is expected to deliver savings of at least \$52.5 million over four years.

2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
7.5	15	15	15

Printing Allowance

Labor will slash MP printing allowance to \$100,000 (a thirty three per cent reduction), delivering savings of \$23.4 million over four years.

On 1 July 2006, the government increased the printing allowance for members of the House of Representatives from \$125,000 to \$150,000. Allowances for Senators went to \$20,000 from \$16,667.

Today's announcement builds on Labor's policy to reverse these changes to printing allowances.

2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
	7.8	7.8	7.8

Government Communications Unit

PMC's central Government Communications Unit has a budget of \$5.6 million per year, and coordinates the Governments advertising campaigns. Consistent with Labor's policy of reducing Government advertising, Labor will abolish this unit.

2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
2.8	5.6	5.6	5.6

The legitimate aggregate media buying function of the unit will be absorbed into the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Media Monitoring

Government Departments spend upwards of \$6 million per annum on media monitoring.

Labor considers that Government Departments should be concentrating on developing long term policy solutions for Australia, not short term responses to the Howard Government's political problem of the day.

Labor will reduce spending on media monitoring by \$4 million per year.

2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
	4	4	4

Previously Announced Savings Include:

Government Advertising

Since 1996, the Howard Government has spent almost \$2 billion on taxpayer funded government advertising, such as the scandal-ridden "it's not called

Work Choices anymore" campaign and the upcoming Climate Clever campaign.

Labor will end the abuse of Government advertising. All ad campaigns in excess of \$250,000 will be vetted by the Auditor General or their designate.

This will deliver savings of \$100 million per year.

Tax deductions for political donations

In 2005 the Government increased the annual limit on the tax- deductibility of political donations from \$100 to \$1,500 and extended the deduction to corporations.

The deduction effectively means that the taxpayer provides up to a \$1.35 subsidy for each \$3 donated to a political party, on top of substantial amounts of public funding provided to all parties.

Labor will remove this taxpayer subsidy completely and deliver savings of at least \$11.6 million per year.

Government Travel

The Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) estimates the Commonwealth spends \$600 million a year on travel.

The ANAO have indicated that substantial annual savings are possible from improved administration and greater use of discounted fares.

Labor will instruct the Department of Finance to drive improved processes (administrative, best fare of the day and high utilisation of discounted fares) and make an annual saving of \$15 million.

Political opinion polls/market research

The Howard Government is spending an average of \$30.1 million on political opinion polls and market research each year – a gross misuse of public funds for the government's political purposes.

While Labor recognises that some market research is legitimate to improve service delivery, much of the activity is skewed towards political or quasi-political activities to support the Howard Government's political campaigns.

Labor will save \$15 million per year by drastically cutting back the Howard Government's use of political opinion polls and market research.

Consultants

An extraordinary \$484.1 million was spent by the Commonwealth on consultants in 2005-06. Labor will reduce this excessive spending by 25 per cent, delivering an annual saving of \$112.5 million.