

Private Health Insurance Ombudsman

Health and Ageing Portfolio Agency

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Section 1: Overview

The Private Health Insurance Ombudsman (PHIO) is a corporation established by the *National Health Act 1953*. It is subject to the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997*.

PHIO's main function is to provide an independent service for dealing with complaints about private health insurance. Through this activity, PHIO also identifies underlying problems in the practices of private health funds or health providers relevant to the administration of private health insurance.

PHIO may, as a result, conduct investigations into the practices of health funds or may conduct such investigations at the request of the Minister or on the Ombudsman's own initiative.

PHIO publishes information on its complaints handling activity and the Ombudsman reports and makes recommendations to the Minister and Department on health insurance practices and associated regulation, arising out of complaints dealt with or investigations conducted by PHIO.

In undertaking these activities, PHIO aims to provide a system that is accessible, effective, timely, objective and non-judgemental. PHIO encourages health funds to continuously improve their own complaints handling practices.

PHIO participates, as required, in policy and industry discussions so that the industry, legislators and policy makers are made aware of the implications of current or proposed practices and policies on private health insurance consumers.

PHIO also provides information services and products to explain private health insurance arrangements and consumer rights and publishes an annual *State of the Health Funds Report*. This report provides information on the comparative performance of health funds.

Under the *Private Health Insurance Complaints Levy Act 1995*, levies are imposed on health funds based on membership levels to offset the cost of the operations of the PHIO.

Table 1.1: Agency Outcomes and Output Groups

Outcome	Output Groups
Consumers and providers have confidence in the administration of private health insurance.	Output Group 1 – Advice and recommendations about the private health insurance industry. Output Group 2 – Direct delivery of services.

Section 2: Resources for 2006-07

2.1: APPROPRIATIONS AND OTHER RESOURCES

Table 2.1 shows the total resources from all origins for 2006-07, including appropriations. The table summarises how revenue will be applied by outcome, administered and outputs (departmental outputs).

Table 2.1: Appropriations and other resources 2006-07

	Appropriations				Total approp \$'000	Receipts (b) \$'000	Total \$'000
	Bill No. 1	Bill No. 2		Special			
	\$'000	SPP \$'000	Other (a) \$'000	approp \$'000			
Private Health Insurance Ombudsman (PHIO)							
Administered	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Departmental	1,359	-	-	-	1,359	20	1,379
Total resources	1,359	-	-	-	1,359	20	1,379

(a) Includes new administered expenses and administered assets and liabilities

(b) Departmental and administered receipts from independent sources that are available to be spent.

2.2: 2006-07 BUDGET MEASURES

Budget measures relating to PHIO as explained in Budget Paper No.2 are summarised in Table 2.2. The table also identifies the relevant outcomes, administered items and outputs associated with each measure.

Further details of these measures are published in Budget Paper No.2.

Table 2.2: PHIO measures

	2006-07 \$'000	2007-08 \$'000	2008-09 \$'000	2009-10 \$'000
Private Health Insurance Enhanced Choices ⁽¹⁾				
Private Health Insurance Ombudsman Departmental	-	562	564	566
Administered	-	-	-	-
Total	-	562	564	566

(1) This measure is fully offset by an increase to the Private Health Insurance Complaints Levy.

2.3: OTHER REVENUE AVAILABLE TO BE USED

Table 2.3 provides details of revenue obtained by PHIO for provision of goods or services. This revenue is approved for use by PHIO.

Table 2.3: Other revenue available to be used

	Estimated revenue 2005-06 \$'000	Budget estimate 2006-07 \$'000
Departmental other revenues		
Interest	20	20
Revenue from related entities	-	1,435
Total departmental other revenues available to be used	20	1,455

2.4: MOVEMENTS OF ADMINISTERED FUNDS FROM 2005-06 TO 2006-07

2.5: SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS

2.6: SPECIAL ACCOUNTS

2.7: ADMINISTERED CAPITAL AND DEPARTMENTAL EQUITY INJECTIONS AND LOANS

Sections 2.4 to 2.7 are not applicable to PHIO.

Section 3: Outcomes

General Government Sector (GGS) agencies are required to plan, budget and report under an outcomes structure. GGS agencies produce outputs (departmental outputs) and also administer activities and programs on behalf of the Government (administered programs). This section explains how the resources identified in Section 2 will be used to deliver outputs and administered programs to contribute to the outcome for PHIO.

3.1: SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES AND CONTRIBUTION TO OUTCOMES

The relationship between activities of PHIO and the outcomes is summarised in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Contributions to outcomes

Private Health Insurance Ombudsman	
Ombudsman – Mr John Powlay	
Outcome – Consumers and providers have confidence in the administration of private health insurance.	
Total price of outputs	\$2.814m
Total departmental outcomes and appropriations	\$1.359m
Total administered expenses	\$0
Output group 1	Total price of outputs \$0.240m
Advice and recommendations about the private health insurance industry.	
Output group 2	Total price of outputs \$2.574m
Direct delivery of services.	

3.2: OUTCOMES – DEPARTMENTAL AND ADMINISTERED

Departmental Appropriations by Outcome

PHIO has total departmental appropriations of \$1.359 million in 2006-07.

Administered Appropriations by Outcome

PHIO does not receive any administered appropriations.

3.3: OUTCOME SUMMARY – THE YEAR AHEAD

Effective complaints handling and dispute resolution remains the main focus of PHIO's activities. In 2006-07 PHIO is planning to handle a similar number of complaints to last year but to improve on the timeliness in handling complaints, particularly for those requiring in-depth investigation.

Some key challenges in the year ahead will include encouraging health funds to continue to improve the quality of advice and information products for consumers, particularly in regard to product features that restrict the level of benefits available for certain treatments, monitoring the impact of changes to funding arrangements for prostheses and medical devices and ensuring that any changes to health fund agreements with hospitals and other health providers do not unduly disadvantage consumers.

During the year PHIO will also implement changes resulting from the expansion of PHIO's powers. The expanded powers will include the jurisdiction to deal with complaints by and about a wider range of private health providers and professionals as well as increased use of the PHIO's mediation role in contract negotiations between health funds and providers.

Consumers and providers will be more confident about the administration of private health insurance if they have access to reliable, accurate and independent information explaining health insurance arrangements, what can reasonably be expected, their rights and obligations.

In the year ahead, PHIO will work with the department and health funds to define standard product information to be provided about each health insurance product. PHIO will also establish a website to allow consumers to compare health funds, key features of their products and arrangements with health providers.

Key Strategic Directions for 2006-07

During 2006-07, PHIO will:

- build on the expansion of PHIO's jurisdiction and powers, to ensure that PHIO is able to act effectively to protect the interests of insured persons in relation to all aspects of private health insurance and services provided arrangements between health providers and health funds; and
- contribute to consumer empowerment and competitiveness within the private health insurance market by improving the quality and accessibility of consumer information on private health insurance products.

Major Activities

PHIO will continue its role of providing an independent information and dispute resolution service.

PHIO will continue to undertake activities provided for under the *Health Legislation Amendment (Private Health Insurance Reform) Act 2004*. In particular, the Ombudsman will publish the second annual *State of the Health Funds Report*.

PHIO will take on additional responsibilities to investigate and resolve complaints. This will include the ability to investigate complaints in relation to additional service providers and to mediate in disputes between health funds and health service providers.

Resourcing

Table 3.1 shows how the 2006-07 Budget appropriations translate to total resourcing for PHIO, including administered expenses, revenue from government (appropriation), revenue from other sources, and the total price of outputs.

Table 3.1: Total resources for PHIO

	Estimated actual 2005-06 \$'000	Budget estimate 2006-07 \$'000
Departmental revenue		
Total revenue from government (appropriations) contributing to price of departmental outputs	1,160	1,359
Total revenue from other sources	20	1,455
Total price of departmental outputs <i>(Total revenue from government and from other sources)</i>	1,180	2,814
Departmental revenue by output group		
Output Group 1 - Advice and recommendations about the private health insurance industry	200	240
Output Group 2 - Direct delivery of services	980	2,574
Total price of departmental outputs <i>(Total revenue from government and from other sources)</i>	1,180	2,814
Total estimated resourcing for PHIO <i>(Total price of outputs and administered appropriations)</i>	1,180	2,814
	2005-06	2006-07
Average staffing level (number)	8	8

Contribution of Administered Programs to PHIO

There are no administered programs for PHIO.

Contribution of Departmental Outputs to PHIO

Output Group 1: Advice and recommendations about the private health insurance industry

Including:

- submissions and reports to Parliament;
- the Minister;
- the Department; and
- other key stakeholders about the regulatory and consumer protection regimes for private health insurance.

Output Group 2: Direct delivery of services

Including:

- complaints handling dispute resolution service;
- investigations of health fund practices;
- production and distribution of information products;
- publication of an annual *State of the Health Funds Report*; and
- development of a website providing an independent source of information on health insurance products.

Performance Information for PHIO

Performance information for administered programs, individual outputs and output groups relating to PHIO are summarised in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Key Performance Information for PHIO

Indicator	Measured by	Reference Point or Target
Output Group 1 – Advice and Recommendations About the Private Health Insurance Industry		
Quality, relevant, and timely advice, submissions and reports.	Level of stakeholder satisfaction, as measured by stakeholder feedback.	Maintain or increase from previous year.
Efficient advisory services.	Production of a range of advisory service products including submissions and public presentations.	Production of at least 12 submissions and public presentations.
Price: \$0.240m		

Indicator	Measured by	Reference Point or Target
Output Group 2 – Direct Delivery of Services		
Efficient complaints handling service.	Complaints received during the year finalised.	90% complaints received and finalised.
Accessible, effective and timely complaints handling service.	Customer satisfaction survey.	80% of respondents satisfied or very satisfied.
Improved fund or industry practices as a result of PHIO investigation recommendations.	Proportion of recommendations that have resulted in changes to fund or industry practices.	75% of recommendations result in changes to fund or industry practice.
Information products produced are useful and informative for consumers.	Consumer satisfaction survey.	75% of respondents finding the information they received useful or very useful.
Timeliness of complaint resolution.	Percentage of complaints finalised within one month of receipt and a reduction in the average time taken to finalise level 3 disputes.	80% of complaints finalised within one month. Reduction in average time taken finalising level 3 disputes.
Quality, accurate information about private health insurance.	Publication of the <i>State of the Health Funds Report 2006-07</i> . Website established and accessible.	<i>State of the Health Funds Report 2006-07</i> published by 31 March 2007. Website to be established by 1 April 2007.
Price: \$2.574m		

Evaluations

There are no evaluations planned to be undertaken by PHIO in 2006-07.

Major Reviews

There are no major reviews planned to be undertaken by PHIO in 2006-07.

Performance Improvement Initiatives

There are no performance improvement initiatives planned to be undertaken by PHIO in 2006-07.

Section 4: Other Reporting Requirements

4.1: PURCHASER-PROVIDER ARRANGEMENTS

There are no purchaser–provider arrangements reported by PHIO.

4.2: COST RECOVERY ARRANGEMENTS

There are no cost recovery arrangements reported by PHIO.

Section 5: Budgeted Financial Statements

5.1: ANALYSIS OF BUDGETED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

In 2004, the Parliament approved additional responsibilities for the Private Health Insurance Ombudsman with the passage of the *Health Legislation Amendment (Private Health Insurance Reform) Act 2004*. In particular, the Ombudsman is now required to produce an annual State of the Health Funds Report, containing a range of information on health funds.

The Ombudsman received additional funding of \$0.200 million per annum from 2005-06 to enable PHIO to undertake the additional activities provided for in the 2004 legislative amendment. The Private Health Insurance Complaints Levy was increased from 2005-06 to allow for the increase in funding for the Private Health insurance Ombudsman. This additional funding has allowed the Private Health Insurance Ombudsman to budget for a balanced operating result in 2006-07 and in forward years.

The Australian Government will provide further additional funding of \$0.200 million in 2006-07 to enable the Ombudsman to undertake the expanded powers referred to in section 3.3 (increasing the range of persons and entities that may complain to the Ombudsman and increased capacity to undertake mediation between health insurers and service providers).

The Department of Health and Ageing will provide additional funding to the PHIO of \$1.435m in 2006-07 to meet the cost of establishing a website to provide better information on health insurance products and provider arrangements. The Australian Government will provide additional funding in 2007-08 (\$0.562m), 2008-09 (\$0.564m) and 2009-10 (\$0.566m) to meet the ongoing cost of maintaining and updating the website. The cost to the budget of this additional funding from 2007-08 will be fully offset by increases in the Private Health Insurance Complaints Levy.

5.2: BUDGETED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TABLES

Table 5.1: Budgeted Departmental Income Statement (for the period ended 30 June)

	Estimated actual 2005-06 \$'000	Budget estimate 2006-07 \$'000	Forward estimate 2007-08 \$'000	Forward estimate 2008-09 \$'000	Forward estimate 2009-10 \$'000
Income					
Revenues from ordinary activities					
Appropriation revenues	1,160	1,359	1,923	1,928	1,930
Other revenues from related entities	-	1,435	-	-	-
Goods and services	-	-	-	-	-
Interest	20	20	20	20	20
Dividends	-	-	-	-	-
Resources received free of charge	-	-	-	-	-
Rents	-	-	-	-	-
Royalties	-	-	-	-	-
Correction of fundamental error	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Revenues from ordinary activities	1,180	2,814	1,943	1,948	1,950
EXPENSE					
Expenses from ordinary activities (excluding borrowing costs expense)					
Employees	700	949	951	955	956
Suppliers	460	1,345	834	835	836
Grants	-	-	-	-	-
Subsidies	-	-	-	-	-
Depreciation and amortisation	20	20	158	158	158
Correction of fundamental error	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Expenses from ordinary activities (excluding borrowing costs expense)	1,180	2,314	1,943	1,948	1,950
Operating surplus or (deficit) from ordinary activities					
	-	500	-	-	-
Net credit or (debit) to asset revaluation reserve	-	-	-	-	-
Total changes in equity other than those resulting from transactions with owners as owners	-	500	-	-	-

Table 5.2: Budgeted Departmental Balance Sheet (as at 30 June)

	Estimated actual 2005-06 \$'000	Budget estimate 2006-07 \$'000	Forward estimate 2007-08 \$'000	Forward estimate 2008-09 \$'000	Forward estimate 2009-10 \$'000
ASSETS					
Financial assets					
Cash	158	212	357	484	580
Receivables	-	-	-	-	-
Investments accounted for under the equity method	-	-	-	-	-
Other investments	500	500	500	500	500
Accrued revenues	-	-	-	-	-
Other financial assets	-	-	-	-	-
Total financial assets	658	712	857	984	1,080
Non-financial assets					
Land and buildings	-	-	-	-	-
Infrastructure, plant and equipment	90	620	512	404	296
Investment properties	-	-	-	-	-
Heritage and cultural assets	-	-	-	-	-
Inventories	-	-	-	-	-
Intangibles	-	-	-	-	-
Other non-financial assets	-	-	-	-	-
Total non-financial assets	90	620	512	404	296
Total assets	748	1,332	1,369	1,388	1,376
LIABILITIES					
Interest bearing liabilities					
Loans	-	-	-	-	-
Leases	-	-	-	-	-
Overdraft	-	-	-	-	-
Total interest bearing liabilities	-	-	-	-	-
Provisions					
Employees	225	299	344	362	348
Other provisions	-	-	-	-	-
Total provisions	225	299	344	362	348
Payables					
Suppliers	19	29	21	22	24
Grants	-	-	-	-	-
Dividends	-	-	-	-	-
Borrowing costs	-	-	-	-	-
Other payables	-	-	-	-	-
Total payables	19	29	21	22	24
Total liabilities	244	328	365	384	372

Table 5.2: Budgeted Departmental Balance Sheet (as at 30 June) (cont)

	Estimated actual 2005-06 \$'000	Budget estimate 2006-07 \$'000	Forward estimate 2007-08 \$'000	Forward estimate 2008-09 \$'000	Forward estimate 2009-10 \$'000
EQUITY					
Parent entity interest					
Contributed equity	-	-	-	-	-
Reserves	-	-	-	-	-
Statutory funds	-	-	-	-	-
Retained surpluses or accumulated deficits	504	1,004	1,004	1,004	1,004
Total parent entity interest	504	1,004	1,004	1,004	1,004
Outside equity interest					
Contributed equity	-	-	-	-	-
Reserves	-	-	-	-	-
Retained surpluses or accumulated deficits	-	-	-	-	-
Total outside equity interest	-	-	-	-	-
Total equity	504	1,004	1,004	1,004	1,004
Current assets	561	999	1,027	1,041	1,032
Non-current assets	187	333	342	347	344
Current liabilities	151	203	227	238	231
Non-current liabilities	93	125	139	146	141

Table 5.3: Budgeted Departmental Statement of Cash Flows (for the period ended 30 June)

	Estimated actual 2005-06 \$'000	Budget estimate 2006-07 \$'000	Forward estimate 2007-08 \$'000	Forward estimate 2008-09 \$'000	Forward estimate 2009-10 \$'000
OPERATING ACTIVITIES					
Cash received					
Goods and services	2	2	2	2	2
Appropriations	1,160	1,359	1,923	1,928	1,930
Interest	18	18	18	18	18
Dividends	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Cash from Related Entities	-	1,435	-	-	-
Total cash received	1,180	2,814	1,943	1,948	1,950
Cash used					
Employees	650	875	906	937	970
Suppliers	462	1,335	842	834	834
Grants	-	-	-	-	-
Borrowing costs	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Extraordinary items	-	-	-	-	-
Total cash used	1,112	2,210	1,748	1,771	1,804
Net cash from or (used by) operating activities	68	604	195	177	146
INVESTING ACTIVITIES					
Cash received					
Purchase of property, plant, equipment and intangibles	-	-	-	-	-
Proceeds from sales of financial instruments	-	-	-	-	-
Bills of exchange and promissory notes	-	-	-	-	-
Repayments of loans made	-	-	-	-	-
Investments (s.39 FMA Act; s.18 CAC Act; s.19 CAC Act)	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Extraordinary items	-	-	-	-	-
Total cash received	-	-	-	-	-
Cash used					
Purchase of property, plant equipment and intangibles	50	550	50	50	50
Purchase of financial instruments	-	-	-	-	-
Bills of exchange and promissory notes	-	-	-	-	-
Loans made	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Extraordinary items	-	-	-	-	-
Total cash used	50	550	50	50	50
Net cash from or (used by) investing activities	(50)	(550)	(50)	(50)	(50)

Table 5.3: Budgeted Departmental Statement of Cash Flows (for the period ended 30 June) (cont)

	Estimated actual 2005-06 \$'000	Budget estimate 2006-07 \$'000	Forward estimate 2007-08 \$'000	Forward estimate 2008-09 \$'000	Forward estimate 2009-10 \$'000
FINANCING ACTIVITIES					
Cash received					
Appropriations - contributed equity	-	-	-	-	-
Proceeds from issuing financial instruments	-	-	-	-	-
Proceeds from loans	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Extraordinary items	-	-	-	-	-
Total cash received	-	-	-	-	-
Cash used					
Repayments of debt	-	-	-	-	-
Capital use charge paid	-	-	-	-	-
Dividends paid	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Extraordinary items	-	-	-	-	-
Total cash used	-	-	-	-	-
Net cash from/(used by) financing activities	-	-	-	-	-
Net increase or (decrease) in cash held	18	54	145	127	96
Cash at the beginning of the reporting period	140	158	212	357	484
Effect of exchange rate movements on cash at the beginning of reporting period	-	-	-	-	-
Cash at the end of the reporting period	158	212	357	484	580

Table 5.4: Departmental Statement of Changes in Equity – Summary of Movement (Budget year 2006-07)

	Accumulated results \$'000	Asset revaluation reserve \$'000	Other reserves \$'000	Contributed equity/ capital \$'000	Total equity \$'000
Opening balance as at 1 July 2006					
Balance carried forward from previous period	504	-	-	-	504
Adjustment for changes in accounting policies	-	-	-	-	-
Adjusted opening balance	504	-	-	-	504
Income and expense					
Income and expenses recognised directly in equity:					
Gain/loss on revaluation of property	-	-	-	-	-
Sub-total income and expense	-	-	-	-	-
Net operating result	500	-	-	-	500
Total income and expenses recognised directly in equity	1,004	-	-	-	1,004
Transactions with owners					
<i>Distribution to owners</i>					
Returns on capital					
Dividends	-	-	-	-	-
Restructuring	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Contribution by owners</i>					
Appropriation (equity injection)	-	-	-	-	-
Other:					
Restructuring	-	-	-	-	-
Sub-total transactions with owners	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers between equity components	-	-	-	-	-
Estimated closing balance as at 30 June 2007	1,004	-	-	-	1,004

Table 5.5: Department Capital Budget Statement

	Estimated actual 2005-06 \$'000	Budget estimate 2006-07 \$'000	Forward estimate 2007-08 \$'000	Forward estimate 2008-09 \$'000	Forward estimate 2009-10 \$'000
CAPITAL APPROPRIATIONS					
Total equity injections	-	-	-	-	-
Total loans	-	-	-	-	-
Total capital appropriations	-	-	-	-	-
Represented by:					
Purchase of non-financial assets	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total represented by	-	-	-	-	-
PURCHASE OF NON-FINANCIAL ASSETS					
Funded by capital appropriation	-	-	-	-	-
Funded internally by					
Departmental resources	50	550	50	50	50
Total	50	550	50	50	50

Table 5.6: Departmental Property, Plant, Equipment and Intangibles — Summary of Movement (Budget year 2006-07)

	Land	Buildings	Other infrastructure plant and equipment	Computer software	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
As at 1 July 2006					
Gross book value	-	-	110	-	110
Accumulated depreciation	-	-	20	-	20
Opening net book value	-	-	90	-	90
Additions:					
by purchase	-	-	550	-	550
by finance lease	-	-	-	-	-
from acquisitions of entities or operations (including restructuring)	-	-	-	-	-
Net revaluation increment/decrement	-	-	-	-	-
Reclassifications	-	-	-	-	-
Depreciation/amortisation expense	-	-	20	-	20
Recoverable amount write-downs	-	-	-	-	-
Other movements	-	-	-	-	-
Disposals:					
from disposal of entities or operations (including restructuring)	-	-	-	-	-
other disposals	-	-	-	-	-
As at 30 June 2007					
Gross book value	-	-	660	-	660
Accumulated depreciation	-	-	40	-	40
Estimated closing net book value	-	-	620	-	620

5.3: NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The budgeted financial statements for PHIO are prepared for the budget year, previous year and three forward years.

Departmental Financial Statements

Budgeted Departmental Income Statement (for the period ended 30 June)

This statement provides a picture of the expected financial results for the agency by identifying full accrual expenses and revenues. This highlights whether the agency is operating at a sustainable level.

Budgeted Departmental Balance Sheet (as at 30 June)

The statement shows the financial position of the agency. It enables decision-makers to track the management of the agency's assets and liabilities.

Budgeted Departmental Statement of Cash Flows (for the period ended 30 June)

Budgeted cash flows as reflected in the statement of cash flows, provides important information on the extent and nature of cash flows by characterising them into expected cash flows from operating activities, investing activities and financing activities.

Departmental Statement of Changes in Equity – Summary of Movement (Budget year 2006-07)

This table shows the movements in equity during the budget year.

Departmental Capital Budget Statement

The capital budget statement shows all planned capital expenditure on non-financial assets, whether funded through capital appropriations for additional equity, borrowings or from funds from internal sources.

Departmental Property, Plant, Equipment and Intangibles — Summary of Movement (Budget year 2006-07)

This table shows budgeted acquisitions and disposals of the agency's non financial assets during the budget year.