The OPEN ECONOMY PROJECT

Welcome to the Australian Greens Open Economy Project – beta release. This program offers a new way to explore government budgets and spending, and compare them with corporations and other financial entities at various scales and time periods. You can play around with the budget data we’ve loaded, or have a go at creating your own models to share.

NAVIGATION

When you first arrive at the Open Economy project you’ll see a couple of pie-chart looking things sitting in space: these are financial models to scale, in Australian dollars1[[1]](#footnote-1). Depending on the device you’re using, you can zoom and scroll around through this imaginary financial space using the mouse wheel or the magnifying glass icons top right.

THE FINANCIAL ENTITIES…

These are not pie charts: they are actually an overlay of four important values for any financial entity. On the left side is the balance sheet: the assets and liabilities, with an indicator as to the net debt or equity. On the right side is the budget: the revenue and expenses, again with an indicator as to the surplus or deficit of the model. At any time you can grab a model and move it around the place.

…AND THEIR INTERNAL WORKINGS

Double click on any of these quadrants to display that side of the model – the balance sheet or the budget. Double click on one of the halves and it will display that value alone. Double click once more and it expands to reveal its component parts – provided the data is there. Anything displaying ellipsis (…) is telling you it contains more data. Note that as you’re clicking away on things, the ‘info’ panel on the right is showing what you’ve clicked on and its value, and maybe a hyperlink or annotation if the data is there.

At any time you can right click on a model to get some context-sensitive options – generally reset, scale or delete. If you’ve got the balance sheet or budget halves displayed, you can right click to ‘expand both’ – for example, to be able to unfold taxes and spending at the same time.

FINANCIAL SPACE AND TIME

These models are infinitely scalable in financial space/time – if the data is there, you can roll backward and forward through financial years and you should see the models change as their values change.

If you see a model go grey, it means you’ve passed out of a date range for which there’s data. If you see a model disappear behind a white halo, it means you’ve made it too small to see; the halo is to remind you that it’s still there.

WHAT’S ON THE MENU?

1. Click ‘Load’ in the sidebar
2. Select a model
3. Hit the green tick
4. Click to drop it somewhere on the screen

These are our pre-built models. If you’re inclined, you can also hit ‘save’ and the models will be drawn either as a vector (layered SVG format) or raster (PNG format) for fooling around with in a graphics package or pasting into a document.

COULD THIS POSSIBLY BE MORE FUN?

Yes, yes it could. We’ve pre-loaded a limited number of models to get things started, but the fact is, they’re a drop in a deep ocean. You can very easily register on the site and get cracking with your own models of what interests you. There are a few very basic rules of data entry into a spreadsheet – you can download a couple of samples - and then you’re away. Anything you cook up that you think others might like, email us and we can add it to the public library.

To load your own model

1. Register on the website
2. Create a spreadsheet in the Open Economy format (click here for details). You can include spending from multiple years, and/or have income and expenditure side by side, up to the four-quadrant model if you have the data.
3. Upload the spreadsheet and take a look

The code for the model is open-source; if you’re technically minded and see something that could use a fix or an extension, you’re overwhelmingly welcome to get your hands dirty and make this thing better.

For more tips as you play, be sure to check out the help section.

1. Unadjusted; that is, in the dollars of that year, not accounting for currency inflation. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)