



Terms of Reference – Panel of Expert Advisors

Purpose and authority

- 1 The panel of expert advisors was established to ensure that the work of the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) is of the highest analytical quality and well considered. It comprises individuals who have experience across a broad range of policy areas and are available to be consulted on cross-cutting issues associated with policy costings and fiscal policy analysis.

Scope

- 2 The panel is responsible for providing expert advice to the PBO, on an as-needs basis, on matters related to policy costings, fiscal policy analysis and the PBO's research program.

Panel functions

- 3 The role of the panel members includes:
 - providing views on the PBO research program, including on how this research program can be structured to most usefully inform the public debate
 - providing input into the scope of individual pieces of research and reviewing draft reports
 - providing feedback on the guidance and technical material the PBO releases publicly to inform parliamentarians and the public on matters associated with costings and fiscal policy
 - providing expert advice on specific issues to improve the PBO's understanding of policy issues, including behavioural responses and consideration of distributional issues, and to better inform the development of models to cost policy proposals
 - assisting with the ex-post evaluation of policy costings
 - referring the PBO to other experts who would be available to assist with specific matters, as required.
- 4 Panel members may be requested to provide advice and assistance on all, or a subset, of the above functions.

Guiding principles

- 5 The PBO will engage with panel members to better inform internal decisions and deliberations, however final decisions on the scope of the PBO's research program and all technical issues related to policy costings will remain the responsibility of the Parliamentary Budget Officer.
- 6 Panel members will have no direct role in the preparation and provision of policy costings, and the specifics of the confidential policy costing requests, including details of the requester, will not be disclosed to panel members without the explicit consent of the requesting parliamentarian.

Membership

- 7 Members of the panel will be required to agree their terms of engagement, including confidentiality provisions, and will be required to declare current or potential conflicts of interests.
- 8 Membership will be for three years, from the date of signing the deed of engagement, and may be extended by mutual agreement.
- 9 Advice from experts will be provided on a pro-bono basis. The commissioning of any specific pieces of more in-depth analysis from panel members or their affiliates will be managed independently of the panel arrangements. The PBO will cover reasonable travel costs, if required.
- 10 Membership of the panel will be published on the PBO website.
- 11 Additional members may be invited to join the panel over time.

Engagement with panel members

- 12 Engagement with panel members will involve two core activities:
 - a) to meet as a group (or otherwise provide input) once per year to provide feedback on research the PBO has completed during the preceding year, provide input into our prospective research program and discuss broad issues faced by the PBO in undertaking its responsibilities, and
 - b) to engage with the PBO on a one-on-one basis at the initiative of a senior staff member from the PBO to provide advice on a specific technical issue.
- 13 The PBO may initiate some engagements with a number of panel members together, to provide a range of perspectives on a particular issue.
- 14 The expectations of a panel member are that up to around 10 hours per year will be devoted to the above activities. The PBO will endeavour, where possible, to communicate and discuss matters using electronic means (teleconferencing or video conferencing) and to restrict face-to-face meetings.