



Jenny Wilkinson
Parliamentary Budget Officer

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Media release

PBO establishes panel of expert advisors

The Parliamentary Budget Office has today announced the establishment of a seven-person panel of economic, fiscal and public finance experts to assist in ensuring that the work of the Parliamentary Budget Office is of the highest analytical quality, is well considered and draws upon expertise from a range of sources.

Jenny Wilkinson, the Parliamentary Budget Officer, stated, “I am very grateful to the members of the panel for agreeing to serve in this capacity. We are fortunate to have secured people of such experience and expertise. They will be a valuable source of advice for the PBO and will assist with the development and evaluation of our work program and methodologies.”

The members of the inaugural panel and the terms of reference for the panel are attached.

Membership of PBO panel of expert advisors

Paul Abbey

Paul Abbey is a Partner in the International Tax and Transaction Services group of PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). He has experience in tax due diligence, acquisition structuring, capital raisings and initial public offerings. The focus of his work is on issues surrounding consolidation, imputation, capital returns, taxation of trusts, international tax, and PwC's Tax Reform project.

Robert Breunig

Professor Robert Breunig is the Director of the Tax and Transfer Policy Institute at the ANU and held the role of Acting Director of the Crawford School of Public Policy in 2015–16. Professor Breunig has worked in a number of important public policy areas including: the relationship between child care and women's labour supply; the effect of immigration to Australia on the labour market prospects of Australians; and the intergenerational transmission of disadvantage.

Robert Carling

Robert Carling is a Senior Fellow at the Centre for Independent Studies. He specialises in areas of fiscal policy, taxation and federalism. He has been Executive Director, Economic and Fiscal at the New South Wales Treasury and worked at the Australian Government Treasury, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Melinda Cilento

Melinda Cilento is the Chief Executive of the Committee for Economic Development of Australia. She has a number of other roles including being a non-executive director of Woodside Petroleum and Australian Unity. She was previously a Commissioner with the Productivity Commission, and has held senior roles in the Business Council of Australia, the Treasury, Invesco and the International Monetary Fund.

Saul Eslake

Saul Eslake is an independent economist and Vice-Chancellor's Fellow at the University of Tasmania. He has held senior roles in financial markets, including as Chief Economist of the Australia & New Zealand Banking Group (ANZ) and as Chief Economist (Australia and New Zealand) for Bank of America Merrill Lynch. He also held the role of Director of the Productivity Growth Program at the Grattan Institute.

Abigail Payne

Professor Abigail Payne is the Director of the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research and holds the Ronald Henderson Professorship. Professor Payne's research focuses on empirical public economics issues, including how government policy affects spending and performance. Her research in education has focussed on the drivers of decisions to attend post-secondary education and understanding gender differences in educational attendance and performance.

David Tune AO PSM

David Tune is the Chair of the Aged Care Sector Committee which advises the Government on aged care policy development and implementation and helps to guide the future reform of the aged care system. He has held many senior positions in the Australian Public Service, including Secretary of the Department of Finance, Associate Secretary in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Deputy Secretary in the Treasury and senior executive positions in the Department of Social Security and Family and Community Services.

Terms of reference – Panel of expert advisors

Purpose and authority

- 1 The panel of expert advisors is being established to ensure that the work of the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) is of the highest analytical quality and well considered. It is to be comprised of individuals who have experience across a broad range of 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 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 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 interest.
- 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 executive 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 gather 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.