

Terms of Reference - Interim Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee

PURPOSE

The Government has committed to establishing an Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee before the end of 2022 to provide non-binding written advice on economic inclusion, including policy settings, systems and structures, and the adequacy, effectiveness and sustainability of income support payments ahead of every Budget.

MEMBERSHIP

The Committee will have up to 14 members, including a Chair, and will include social security academic experts, representatives from key relevant advocacy organisations, unions, business peak bodies, the philanthropic sector and economists.

The Prime Minister will appoint an interim Committee ahead of the introduction of legislation in 2023 for the establishment of a permanent Committee. Under legislation, members will be appointed by written instrument and hold office on a part-time basis for the period specified in the instrument, which must not exceed 3 years. Members are eligible for reappointment.

Members are able to nominate a person for the Minister for Social Services' agreement to attend the meeting in the member's place, if the member is unable to be present at the meeting.

SCOPE

The Committee will consider and provide advice and proposals on:

- a) Economic Inclusion including approaches to boost participation through policy settings, systems and structures, in the social security system and other government programs and policies.
- b) The adequacy, effectiveness and sustainability of income support payments including options to boost economic inclusion and tackle disadvantage.
- c) Options to reduce barriers and disincentives to work, including in relation to social security and employment services.
- d) Options for tailored responses to address barriers to economic inclusion for long term unemployed and disadvantaged groups, including place-based approaches at the local level.
- e) The impact of economic inclusion policies on gender equality including consideration of work being undertaken by the Women's Economic Equality Taskforce.
- f) The trends of inequality markers in Australia, and any other relevant advice.

The Committee's report to Government should include supporting discussion and analysis. In providing advice on these matters, the Committee will have regard to the Government's fiscal strategy, existing policies, and the long-term sustainability of the social security system.

TIMING

The Committee will meet at least every quarter, with the first meeting of the interim Committee in December 2022. The Committee will present its first report to Government prior to the 2023-24 Federal Budget and report on a yearly basis.

High level recommendations are to be released publicly (with the timing to be agreed between the Chair and Ministers), but must be no later than 14 days prior to each Budget being handed down. To inform Government deliberations for Budget, the Committee's advice would be required in February – March 2023.

ADMINISTRATION

Secretariat support for the Committee will be provided by the Department of Social Services (DSS). DSS and other government departments, including the Treasury and the Department of Finance, will provide advice and information to the Committee.

Meeting agendas and papers will be shared at least 3 days before each meeting, and action items recorded and addressed at the next meeting.