

## **Albanese Government's Productivity Agenda: Economic Reform Roundtable**

**12 August 2025**

Following the Albanese Labor Government's victory at the May 2025 federal election, Treasurer the Hon. Jim Chalmers MP addressed the National Press Club on 19 June outlining the government's approach to economic reform and its three key priorities for their second term in government.

In the face of continued global volatility, the Treasurer emphasised the need to boost productivity, strengthen the budget, and create a more resilient economy to lift the living standards of working Australians.

As such, the Albanese Government has pledged to embed productivity at the core of its second term agenda, making it a bigger focus at the Expenditure Review Committee and in dealings with the state governments.

The Treasurer has also asked the Productivity Commission Chair to brief cabinet ministers on the productivity challenges in their portfolios and seek their input into the Commissions five pillar reports. The Treasurer also spoke of his plan to write to regulators across government seeking specific, measurable actions to reduce compliance costs without compromising standards.

The Albanese Government's approach includes the five pillar productivity agenda embarked on following the release of the 2023 Intergenerational Report, with the government already making significant progress on each pillar. These include:

- Creating a more dynamic and resilient economy
- Investing in the net zero transformation
- Building a skilled and adaptable workforce
- Harnessing data and digital technology
- Delivering quality care more efficiently

The Treasurer also announced in his address that consideration of further tax reform will be part of progressing the government's three priorities of productivity, resilience, and budget sustainability.

### **Economic Reform Roundtable**

At the core of the Albanese Government's approach is an Economic Reform Roundtable planned for 19 to 21 August 2025 which will bring together the depth and breadth of the Australian economy, from government, business, unions, and civil society to seize the

opportunity and responsibility for reform. The roundtable will seek to build a consensus on national reform priorities which will inform the government's approach to long term economic reform.

The August roundtable will be much smaller than the government's first term Jobs Summit, however the Treasurer has been clear to emphasise it will not be the only opportunity to contribute to the reform agenda.

The government called for submissions addressing three preconditions:

- Ideas are to be put forward in the national interest, not through the prism of sectoral, state or vested interests.
- Ideas or packages of ideas should be budget neutral at a minimum but preferably budget positive overall, taking into account the necessary trade offs.
- Ideas should be specific and practical not abstract or unrealistic.

### **Timeline, Reports and Input**

As part of the Roundtable process, the Treasurer undertook a public consultation process seeking views on priority reforms with a focus on productivity, economic resilience and budget sustainability. This consultation period **closed on 25 July 2025**.

In the lead up to the Roundtable, the Productivity Commission will be releasing interim reports on each of the five pillars in their Productivity Inquiry. This will provide some of the material to support the Economic Reform Roundtable meeting.

Beginning with the first report released on Thursday 31 July, the Productivity Commission will progressively release the interim reports over a two-week period **at 10:30pm AEST on the release dates listed below**.

After the release date, the interim reports will be accessible to the public and submissions may be made via the inquiry webpages.

Thursday 31 July 2025 – available now

- [Creating a more dynamic and resilient economy](#)

Sunday 3 August 2025 – available now

- [Investing in cheaper, cleaner energy and the net zero transformation](#)

Tuesday 5 August 2025 – available now

- [Harnessing data and digital technology](#)

Monday 11 August 2025

- [Building a skilled and adaptable workforce](#)

Wednesday 13 August 2025

- [Delivering quality care more efficiently](#)

The Productivity Commission will hold a webinar available to the public in the days following the release of each of the interim reports.

#### Interim Report 1: Creating a more dynamic and resilient economy

In this interim report, the Productivity Commission presents draft recommendations focused on two key policy reform areas:

- Corporate tax reform to spur business investment.
- Regulating to promote business dynamism.

The draft recommendations targeting these two reform areas are as follows:

- **Draft recommendation 1.1** - Pivot the corporate tax system to a more efficient mix of taxes
- **Draft recommendation 1.2** - Lower the headline company tax rate to 20%
- **Draft recommendation 1.3** - Introduce a net cashflow tax of 5%
- **Draft recommendation 2.1** - Set a clear agenda for regulatory reform
- **Draft recommendation 2.2** - Bolster high-level scrutiny of regulations
- **Draft recommendation 2.3** - Enhance regulatory practice to deliver growth, competition and innovation

The full interim report is available [here](#).

The Productivity Commission is seeking further information and feedback on the first interim report. Submissions are due by 5 pm AEST on **Monday 15 September 2025** which can be made [here](#).

The Productivity Commission's webinar on the first interim report took place at 12pm AEST on Monday 4 August 2025.

#### Interim Report 2: Investing in cheaper, cleaner energy and the net zero transformation

In this interim report, the PC presents draft recommendations focused on three key policy reform areas:

- Reducing the cost of meeting emissions targets
- Speeding up approvals for new energy infrastructure
- Addressing barriers to private investment in adaptation.

The draft recommendations targeting these three reform areas are as follows:

- **Draft recommendation 1.1** - Reducing emissions in the electricity sector after 2030

- Governments should prioritise introducing enduring, broad-based market settings in the electricity sector beyond 2030
- Governments should also phase out any jurisdictional- and technology-specific incentives over time
- **Draft recommendation 1.2** - The Safeguard Mechanism should cover more industrial facilities and carbon leakage provisions should be improved
- **Draft recommendation 1.3** - Introduce an emissions-reduction incentive for heavy vehicles and phase-out policy overlaps for light vehicles
- **Draft recommendation 1.4** - Apply frameworks to achieve emissions targets at least cost and improve transparency
- **Draft recommendation 2.1** - Reform national environment laws
  - The Australian Government should reform environment laws to expedite approvals for clean energy projects and better protect the environment
- **Draft recommendation 2.2** - Set up a specialist 'strike team' for priority projects
- **Draft recommendation 2.3** - Establish a Coordinator-General for priority projects
- **Draft recommendation 2.4** - Consider the energy transition in approval decisions
- **Draft recommendation 3.1** - Set up a climate risk information database covering all climate hazards
- **Draft recommendation 3.2** - Develop a nationally consistent climate resilience rating system for housing
- **Draft recommendation 3.3** - Governments should agree on a series of actions to improve housing resilience over time
- **Draft recommendation 3.4** - Give the Climate Change Authority responsibility for monitoring, evaluation and learning regarding adaptation policy

The full interim report is available [here](#).

The Productivity Commission is seeking further information and feedback on the second interim report. Submissions are due by 5 pm AEST on **Monday 15 September 2025** which can be made [here](#).

The Productivity Commission's webinar on the second interim report took place at 11am AEST on Friday 8 August 2025.

### Interim Report 3: Harnessing data and digital technology

In this interim report, the Productivity Commission presents draft recommendations focused on four key policy reform areas:

- Enable AI's productivity potential
- New pathways to expand data access
- Supporting safe data access and use through outcomes-based privacy regulation

- Enhance reporting efficiency, transparency and accuracy through digital financial reporting.

The draft recommendations targeting these four reform areas are as follows:

- **Draft recommendation 1.1** - Productivity growth from AI will be built on existing legal foundations. Gap analyses of current rules need to be expanded and completed
- **Draft recommendation 1.2** - AI-specific regulation should be a last resort
- **Draft recommendation 1.3** - Pause steps to implement mandatory guardrails for high-risk AI
- **Draft recommendation 2.1** - Establish lower-cost and more flexible regulatory pathways to expand basic data access for individuals and businesses
- **Draft recommendation 3.1** - An alternative compliance pathway for privacy
- **Draft recommendation 3.2** - Do not implement a right to erasure
- **Draft recommendation 4.1** - Make digital financial reporting the default

The full interim report is available [here](#).

The Productivity Commission is seeking further information and feedback on the third interim report. Submissions are due by 5 pm AEST on **Monday 15 September 2025** which can be made [here](#).

The Productivity Commission's webinar on the third interim report took place at 12 pm AEST on Monday 11 August 2025.

#### Interim Report 4: Building a skilled and adaptable workforce

In this interim report, the Productivity Commission presents draft recommendations focused on three key policy reform areas:

- The best resources to improve school student outcomes
- Building skills and qualifications for a more productive workforce
- Fit-for-purpose occupational entry regulations.

The draft recommendations targeting these three reform areas are as follows:

- **Draft recommendation 1.1** - Invest in a single national platform for all teachers to access lesson planning materials
- **Draft recommendation 1.2** - Lead national efforts to ensure equitable access to educational technology (edtech) and artificial intelligence (AI)
- **Draft recommendation 2.1** - Move toward a national system of credit transfer and recognition of prior learning (RPL)
- **Draft recommendation 2.2** - Better target incentives to lift work-related training rates in small and medium enterprises (SMEs)



- **Draft recommendation 3.1** - Remove excessive occupational entry regulations that offer limited benefits
- **Draft recommendation 3.2** - Expand entry pathways and streamline qualification requirements for occupations
- **Draft recommendation 3.3** - Improve the regular reviews of occupational entry regulations
- **Draft recommendation 3.4** - Incentivise occupational entry regulation reform through National Competition Policy

The Productivity Commission is seeking further information and feedback on the fourth interim report. Submissions are due by 5 pm AEST on **Monday 15 September 2025** which can be made [here](#).

The Productivity Commission's webinar on the third interim report will take place at 12 pm AEST on Thursday 14 August 2025. You can register to attend [here](#).

### **Economic Reform Roundtable Issues Papers**

On 7 August, the Albanese Government released three issues papers ahead of the Economic Reform Roundtable.

The issues papers cover each of the three themes of the Roundtable – resilience, productivity, and budget sustainability and tax reform. They define the issues, set out recent trends and outline the big challenges and opportunities we are confronting.

The papers have been released ahead of the Roundtable to give participants the opportunity to engage with these issues in detail and build consensus before the Roundtable where possible.

The Economic Reform Roundtable issue papers can be found [here](#).

### **Economic Reform Roundtable Agenda**

On 1 August, the Albanese Government released the agenda for the Economic Reform Roundtable.

Each day of the three-day Roundtable will address one of the government's three priorities. The first day of the Roundtable will focus on resilience, followed by productivity, and concluding with budget sustainability and tax reform.



The Roundtable will include keynote presentations from RBA Governor Michele Bullock, Productivity Commission Chair Danielle Wood, Treasury Secretary Jenny Wilkinson PSM, and Grattan Institute CEO Dr Aruna Sathanapally.

A detailed agenda for the Roundtable can be found [here](#).

### **Economic Reform Roundtable Invitation List**

The Treasurer has released two main rounds of invitees for the Economic Reform Roundtable.

The first round of invitees was announced on 27 June, and includes leading voices from business, unions, the community sector and our key economic institutions.

The first round of invitees for the Economic Reform Roundtable are as follows:

- Danielle Wood, Chair, Productivity Commission
- Sally McManus, Secretary, Australian Council of Trade Unions
- Michele O’Neil, President, Australian Council of Trade Unions
- Liam O’Brien\*, Assistant Secretary, Australian Council of Trade Unions
- Joseph Mitchell\*, Assistant Secretary, Australian Council of Trade Unions
- Bran Black, Chief Executive Officer, Business Council of Australia
- Andrew McKellar, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Innes Willox, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Industry Group
- Matthew Addison, Chair, Council of Small Business Organisations of Australia
- Cassandra Goldie, Australian Council of Social Service
- Ted O’Brien, Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Treasurer

\*These participants will attend as alternates for the Secretary and President of the ACTU.

The Treasurer’s announcement and further information on each of the attendees can be found [here](#).

The second round of invitees was released on 18 July, and includes expert voices on economic policy, leaders with broad industry and policy experience, and important perspectives from regulators, the public sector and the states.

The second round of invitees for the Economic Reform Roundtable are as follows:

- Sue Lloyd-Hurwitz AM, Chair, National Housing Supply and Affordability Council
- Kerry Schott, Chair, Competition Review Expert Advisory Panel
- Matt Comyn, Chief Executive Officer, Commonwealth Bank of Australia
- Scott Farquhar, Chair, Tech Council of Australia



- Cath Bowtell, Chair, IFM Investors
- Ben Wyatt, Board Member, Woodside, and former Treasurer of Western Australia
- Ken Henry AC, Chair, Australian Climate and Biodiversity Foundation
- Andrew Fraser, Chair, Australian Retirement Trust, Chancellor, Griffith University and former Treasurer of Queensland
- Allegra Spender MP, Federal Independent Member for Wentworth
- Daniel Mookhey MLC, Chair, Board of Treasurers and NSW Treasurer
- Gina Cass-Gottlieb, Chair, Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
- Steven Kennedy PSM, Secretary, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Jenny Wilkinson PSM, Secretary, Department of the Treasury

The Treasurer's announcement and further information on each of the attendees can be found [here](#).

In addition to the two main rounds of invitees announced to-date, on 6 August the Treasurer announced further invitees for specific sessions of the Roundtable agenda. The invitees include policy experts, economists, heads of key government agencies and leaders across business, institutional investors and the broader community.

The session-specific invitees for the Economic Reform Roundtable are as follows:

#### International risks, opportunities and trade

- David Jochinke, President, National Farmers' Federation
- Professor Shiro Armstrong, Australian National University
- Dr Heather Smith PSM FAIIA, National President, Australian Institute of International Affairs

#### Skills attraction, development and mobility

- Professor Barney Glover AO, Commissioner of Jobs and Skills Australia
- Professor Jennifer Westacott AC, Chancellor, Western Sydney University
- Dr Martin Parkinson AC PSM, Chancellor, Macquarie University

#### Capital attraction and business investment

- Mary Delahunty, Chief Executive Officer, Association of Superannuation Funds of Australia
- Rebecca Mikula-Wright, Chief Executive Officer, Investor Group on Climate Change and Asia Investor Group on Climate Change
- Paul Schroder, Chief Executive, AustralianSuper
- Shemara Wikramanayake, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Macquarie Group



#### Better regulation and approvals

- Geraldine Slattery, President Australia, BHP
- Kelly O'Shanassy, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Conservation Foundation
- Michael Brennan, Chief Executive Officer, e61 Institute

#### Competition and dynamism across the federation

- Christine Holgate, Group Executive Chair, Team Global Express
- Rod Sims AO, Former Chair of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
- Professor Flavio Menezes, University of Queensland

#### AI and innovation

- Robyn Denholm, Chair, Strategic Examination of Research and Development
- Ming Long AM, Chair of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation

#### Efficient and high-quality government services, spending and care

- The Hon Victor Dominello, Chief Executive Officer, Future Government Institute
- Dr Angela Jackson, Commissioner (Social Policy), Productivity Commission
- Cassandra Winzar, Chief Economist, Committee for Economic Development of Australia

#### A better tax system

- Dr Aruna Sathanapally, Chief Executive Officer, Grattan Institute
- Professor Bob Breunig, Australian National University
- Chris Richardson, Economist
- Rob Heferen, Commissioner of Taxation

The Treasurer's announcement and further information on each of the attendees can be found [here](#).

In addition to the Roundtable meeting itself, there will be other opportunities outside of the Roundtable to contribute ideas to this reform process.

#### **Economic Reform Roundtable Materials**

Materials released ahead of the Roundtable can be found at the following links:

- [Economic Reform Roundtable Agenda](#)
- [Economic resilience issue paper](#)
- [Productivity issue paper](#)
- [Budget sustainability and tax reform issue paper](#)

**Further information**

For more information, please contact Hawker Britton's Director [John Jarrett](#) on +61 434 384 745.

Hawker Britton will update this paper following the release of each interim report, as well as after the Roundtable has been held and its outcomes are known.

Further Hawker Britton Occasional Papers on the activities of the Federal Government are available [here](#).