



BOURKE STREET
ADVISORY

The Power Behind the Policy: Cabinet Subcommittees

July 2025

Introduction

Who really makes the decisions in government?

Key decisions are often shaped well before they reach full Cabinet. Much of the work happens in smaller, powerful subcommittees. This is where strategy is refined, spending is approved, and priorities are tracked.

Understanding where power sits isn't just useful - it is essential for anyone engaging with the federal government in the 48th Parliament.

If you want to sharpen your strategy and make your engagement count, it pays to know which room the decision is really being made in.

What are Cabinet subcommittees?

Cabinet is the central decision-making body of government. Cabinet is made up of the 22 Ministers with Cabinet rank and is chaired by the Prime Minister, making a total of 23 members.

Cabinet deals with major, whole-of-government decisions, including legislation, budget sign-off, and crisis response.

Cabinet subcommittees are smaller groups of Ministers established to focus on specific areas of policy or governance, such national security or expenditure.

Cabinet subcommittees support Cabinet by:

- Reducing the workload of the full Cabinet
- Enabling deeper, more specialised policy discussion
- Providing coordination across portfolios

Cabinet committees of the 48th Parliament

Cabinet Committee	Purpose
Expenditure Review Committee (ERC)	Reviews and determines government spending; central to Budget decision-making. Decisions of ERC require the endorsement of Cabinet.
National Security Committee (NSC)	Considers the highest-priority, highest risk and most strategic national security matters of the day. Decision of the NSC do not require the endorsement of Cabinet, but decisions with financial implications are endorsed through a joint meeting of the NSC and ERC.
National Security Investment Subcommittee (NSIS)	Operating under the NSC, this subcommittee considers lower-risk, operational and technical national security matters which are primarily financial in natures, but may also consider policy. Decisions of NSIS require endorsement by NSC.
Government Communications Committee (GCC)	This committee oversees the coordination and strategic direction of government advertising campaigns, ensuring consistent messaging across departments. Decisions of GCC require the endorsement of Cabinet.
Parliamentary Business Committee (PBC)	This committee manages the government's legislative agenda, coordinating the scheduling and prioritisation of bills and parliamentary business. Decisions of PBC do not require the endorsement of Cabinet.
Priority and Delivery Committee (PDC)	This committee provides regular oversight of the delivery of key policies and priorities. Decisions of PDC require the endorsement of Cabinet.

Expenditure Review Committee (ERC) membership



Chair
The Hon Anthony Albanese MP



Deputy Chair
The Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP



Member
Senator the Hon Penny Wong



Member
The Hon Richard Marles MP



Member
The Hon Mark Butler MP



Member
Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher



Member
The Hon Catherine King MP



Member
The Hon Dr Daniel Mulino MP



Member
The Hon Amanda Rishworth MP

National Security Committee (NSC) membership



Chair
The Hon Anthony
Albanese MP



Deputy Chair
The Hon
Richard Marles MP



Member
Senator the Hon
Penny Wong



Member
The Hon Dr Jim
Chalmers



Member
Senator the Hon Katy
Gallagher



Member
The Hon
Tony Burke MP



Member
The Hon
Chris Bowen MP



Member
The Hon Michelle
Rowland MP



Member
The Hon
Pat Conroy MP

National Security Investment Subcommittee (NSIS) membership



Chair
Senator the Hon
Katy Gallagher



Deputy Chair
The Hon Richard
Marles MP



Member
The Hon Tony
Burke MP



Member
The Hon
Pat Conroy MP

Government Communications Committee (GCC) membership



Chair
Senator the Hon
Katy Gallagher



Deputy Chair
The Hon
Jason Clare MP



Member
Senator the Hon
Murray Watt



Member
Senator the Hon
Don Farrell



Member
The Hon Patrick
Gorman MP

Parliamentary Business Committee (PBC) membership



Chair
The Hon Tony
Burke MP



Member
Senator the Hon
Penny Wong



Member
Senator the Hon
Katy Gallagher



Member
The Hon Mark
Butler MP



Member
The Hon Michelle
Rowland MP



Member
The Hon Patrick
Gorman MP

Priority and Delivery Committee (PDC) membership



Chair
The Hon Anthony
Albanese MP



Member
Senator the Hon
Katy Gallagher



Member
The Hon Dr Jim
Chalmers MP



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We are dedicated to helping our clients navigate the complex world of engaging with government. We provide the insights and guidance you need to get results.

If you're looking to sharpen your strategy or navigate government decision-making with confidence, get in touch:

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