



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

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The Economic Planning Advisory Council (EPAC) held its second meeting today.

The meeting was attended by the recently appointed Director, Geoff Miller, formerly Deputy Secretary of the Department of Primary Industry.

The Council discussed with Mr Miller the role of EPAC, the priority areas of EPAC's work in the near future, and the progress of arrangements for EPAC staffing.

The meeting confirmed that the main role of EPAC is analysing medium and long-term economic performance in Australia, and factors influencing that performance.

The Government made it clear that while it would be strongly influenced by views expressed within EPAC, it would not seek to use EPAC as a shield against public reaction to difficult decisions.

Responsibility for policy decisions will be clearly with Government.

The meeting discussed current economic conditions, and concurred in the assessment that recovery was underway, although at this stage it was uneven.

While the economy is showing promising signs that recovery is underway, our major problems on the employment front will not be easily or quickly resolved.

A major task ahead of the Council is to identify ways in which the prospective performance can be improved.

This applies particularly to job generation.

EPAC will examine employment in both the narrow economic growth context, and in a broader social adjustment context.

Today's meeting discussed at some length a survey of reviews of the Australian taxation system over the past decade.

The next step in EPAC's taxation review will involve the preparation of a paper on the nature and effects of the current Australian taxation system at Federal, State and Local Government levels.

Other matters discussed at today's meeting included progress towards establishment of the Prices Surveillance Authority; the decision of the recent ACTU Congress; the recent national wage case decision; the adequacy of the Australian data base; and the implications of the recent appreciation of the dollar.

The next meeting of EPAC will be held in Canberra on December 12.