

Policy Impact Program 2021–22

Frequently asked questions

I know there's a policy problem, but do I need to have all the answers on how to solve it?

Not necessarily, but you do need to understand more than simply stating the problem or that the government should provide funding. You will need to outline with some specificity of what needs to change and how. Here you can draw from lessons you've learned from international jurisdictions on your Churchill Fellowship as well as from your own experience and contextual knowledge of the situation domestically.

Can I apply if my policy issue is more of an implementation issue than a policy problem?

Policy making and policy implementation are intricately connected. Underlying every policy idea, is the desire to create change. Fellows' ideas may seek to make incremental change to existing policy, propose a new or innovative policy where none exists, or may even make a case for major policy reform. Other ideas, however, will be directed at the level of policy implementation — for example, proposing a new program or a better way of doing things than what is currently being done:

“A policy decision ‘identifies the problem(s) to be addressed, stipulates the objective(s) to be pursued and structures the implementation process’. Passing policies does not guarantee success on the ground if policies are not implemented well.” — OECD, “The Nature of Change and Policy Implementation”.

While this program is focused on policy, if you feel you address implementation issues that are important for policy change — or address a gap between the two — we welcome your application. Please make sure to articulate your understanding of this.

Should I focus on policy at the federal or state level, or both?

Under Australia's federal system, responsibilities are distributed between the federal and state governments. Whether to focus your attention to the federal, state — or indeed at the local level — will depend to a large degree on your topic and the change you are seeking. It may also be at more than one level, for example, you may require program implementation at the state level, but funding at the federal level. This is something you will work through and explore in your *Getting Research into Policy and Practice* (GRiPP) training to help you understand this prior to developing your article. Your Policy Peer Reviewers can also help guide you through this process.

What is the time commitment of the program, approximately?

The time commitment of the Policy Impact Program is substantial, and will depend a great deal on your writing style and the number of drafts you do. Much of the work will fall between your policy training and orientation in early-mid December and your first draft due date on January 30, 2022. Depending on the feedback on your draft from the Editorial Committee and your Policy Peer Reviewers, you will also need to factor in time to incorporate these changes. Note that the majority of the work is flexible and to be done in your own time. The only hard time commitments you will need to put aside in your diary are for orientation and training sessions, Zoom catch ups throughout the project, and of course, the launch event. To meet the article draft due dates, you will need to plan your writing time according to your own schedule.

Who should I choose as my Policy Peer Reviewers (PPRs)?

Your Policy Peer Reviewers will be there to provide feedback on your article. Engaging with them is also a good way to connect with experts in your field and exchange knowledge. To get the most from your PPRs, there are a few factors you might want to consider when deciding on who might be most appropriate.

- Your PPRs should have deep knowledge of the topic of your article and have a good understanding of the policy dimensions of your problem. These might be practitioners, professionals, academics, or policy makers and public servants either working directly in your topic area, or with a significant background of knowledge to draw on.
- You may also want to consider their influence and networks. Whilst this should not be the primary reason for selecting a PPR, having the acknowledged support of a respected expert may add additional credibility and legitimacy to your policy ideas and arguments for decision makers reading your article.
- Consider also whether the support you most need would be someone with a local, state or federal focus, expertise, or influence.

I've listed some PPRs in my application. How and when do I approach them?

You do not need to approach the PPRs you list in your application at this point, and there is flexibility to change these later. If you are selected as one of the PIP 2021-22 Fellows, the Selection Committee will provide feedback on your PPR choices and you can ask for further feedback from the Steering Committee during orientation. You will then be encouraged to extend an informal invitation to them. Upon acceptance, the Steering Committee will send an official letter of invitation, which will include the offer of an honorarium. The Steering Committee will request and review feedback on your articles directly from the PPRs (in addition to any informal communications you might have with them).

Can I have other unofficial advisors or peers review and make suggestions to my article?

Absolutely, and we encourage you to do so. Fellows will undoubtedly have peers and colleagues in their networks whose opinion and respect they value. We welcome you to share your draft articles with them. You can also thank them in your article acknowledgements.

Will I be allowed more than one draft of my article and what is the editorial process?

Yes, you will have the opportunity to revise your article after your first draft. Although yet to be finalised, the production schedule for article drafts and reviews will be roughly as follows:

First draft: You will submit your draft article to the Steering Committee where it will be reviewed by the Committee and an Editor (collectively forming the Editorial Committee). You will be provided with high level feedback, such as the article structure/flow, the policy 'ask,' and policy relevance.

Second draft: After making revisions, you will re-submit your article to the Steering Committee who will forward it to your PPRs (and yourself copied in) with reviewer guidelines and relevant remarks.

Third draft: You will liaise with your PPRs and incorporate their suggestions. Once you and your PPRs are satisfied with the article, you will forward the draft to the Editorial Committee who will conduct a final review and may provide any last minute feedback. At this point we will schedule in a Zoom meeting with Fellows to discuss any issues or difficulties to you may be having.

Fourth draft: You can incorporate any final changes and re-submit to the Steering Committee for pre-production. The article will be laid out and sent to a professional proof-reader. You will be provided with a proof of your article as it will appear in the publication for approval.

Final approval: After changes have been made to the final article, you will receive another copy for final approval.

What is the role of the Editorial Committee in relation to my article?

The Editorial Committee will provide early high-level feedback of your first draft, pertaining to the structure of your article, as well as the policy aspects, such as the 'ask', framing the policy problem, and your policy recommendations. After you have incorporated revisions from your PPRs, the Editorial Committee will do a final proof of your article for general framing, content, use of language and grammar. If you are having difficulties with certain aspects of your article, you can also arrange a meeting to discuss these matters with a member of the Editorial Committee.

I returned from my Fellowship in the last two years and Covid-19 has limited the amount of dissemination of my findings I have been able to do. Will this affect my application?

Not necessarily, but it is advisable to include this note in your application, including any plans that were cancelled due to Covid-19 and ways you have planned to overcome this.

I applied last year. Why should I try again and what advice can you give me?

We understand and appreciate the time and work involved to apply to any program such as PIP. The selection process for PIP in our first round was very competitive, with 55 high quality applications, and unfortunately not all could be chosen.

Applicants each year are considered and ranked alongside all others who apply, according to the criteria in the prospectus. In addition to the quality of the application, the Selection Committee also needs to consider which ideas might be more advanced or timely given the political and social landscape at the time, and those that might be better positioned to benefit from or make an impact through the program given additional time and development. This will change each year.

Thus, if you applied last year, you are welcome and encouraged to apply again, particularly given you have already done the groundwork on the application. We recommend you thoroughly review your application, and consider reframing your arguments with new knowledge gained, as well as including any new insights or traction you have gained on your particular topic since then.

We also recommend the following resources — not available last year — to help you review and perhaps refine your policy ideas and suggestions.

- Read the articles and policy recommendations produced by last year's PIP Fellows in [Policy Futures: A Reform Agenda](#).
- View the PIP Fellows' presentations in the [Churchill Policy Room](#) at Parliament House in March 2021.