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The COAG Business Advisory Forum

Occasional Paper

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The COAG Business Advisory Forum

Background

On March 6 2012 Prime Minister Julia Gillard and the Minister for Finance and Deregulation Penny Wong, together with representatives from the Business Council of Australia and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, announced the establishment of the COAG Business Advisory Forum.

The Seamless National Economy

The establishment of the Forum is part of the government's broader deregulation agenda, and will complement existing work being undertaken by COAG's Business Regulation and Competition Reform Working Group.

In particular, the Forum builds on the COAG National Partnership Agreement to Deliver a Seamless National Economy. The Agreement is available [here](#).

Signed in 2008, the Agreement began a process of reforms that with the aim of ultimately:

- creating a seamless national economy, reducing costs incurred by business in complying with unnecessary and inconsistent regulation across jurisdictions;
- enhancing Australia's longer-term growth, improving workforce participation and overall labour mobility; and
- expanding Australia's productive capacity over the medium-term through competition reform, enabling stronger economic growth.

In order to achieve these outcomes, the Agreement outlines 27 deregulation priority areas. A Productivity Commission examination of 17 of these deregulation priorities estimated that with full implementation, they could lower business costs by about \$4 billion per year and, through improvements to productivity, increase GDP by over \$6 billion in the longer term. The Productivity Commission's report is available [here](#).

A report released earlier this year into the progress of the Agreement found that reforms in 16 of the 27 priority areas had been achieved. Minister Wong's press release following this report is available [here](#).

The Forum

Chaired by the Prime Minister, the Forum will bring together members of COAG (Commonwealth, states and territories, and the Australian Local Government Association) and 25 representatives from the business community, including small business. Recognising that business leaders are best placed to advise on regulatory burdens impacting at the

individual, business or industry level, the Forum will have two main roles:

- To advise Governments on how best to coordinate and progress the remaining areas of competition and regulatory reform; and
- To nominate new areas of regulatory reform that will help lift productivity and drive investment, therefore growing businesses and creating new jobs.

In announcing the Forum, the Prime Minister identified the particular outcomes of lessening of regulatory burden on business operating across multiple states; and increasing the portability of skills and qualifications across states and territories.

The inaugural meeting of the COAG Business Advisory Forum will be held on **12 April 2012**. The Prime Minister will be inviting representatives from business sector to be participants in the Forum.

Support from the Business Sector

The establishment of the Forum has been supported by the Business Council of Australia and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The Business Council of Australia will prepare submission for the Forum based on consultations with the Australian and state-based Chambers of Commerce.