

## The Council of Australian Governments (COAG)

April 2012

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) is the peak intergovernmental forum in Australia. COAG comprises the Prime Minister, State Premiers, Territory Chief Ministers and the President of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA). The Prime Minister chairs COAG.

The role of COAG is to initiate, develop and monitor the implementation of policy reforms that are of national significance and which require cooperative action by Australian governments (for example, health, education and training, Indigenous reform, early childhood development, housing, microeconomic reform, climate change and energy, water reform and natural disaster arrangements).

Potential COAG issues may emerge from major initiatives of one government which impact on other governments or that require the cooperation of other governments. Other issues come to COAG from Ministerial Councils. This can be in the course of implementing existing policy, for example, National Competition Policy, or in developing policies such as food regulation reform.

COAG meets on an as-needed-basis and has met 31 times since it was established in 1992. The most recent meeting was held in August 2011. When insufficient issues exist to require a meeting, issues may be settled by correspondence.

Whereas the agenda for the COAG meeting usually is not available publicly prior to the meeting, the outcomes of COAG meetings are contained in communiqués released at the end of each meeting. Where formal agreements are reached, these may be embodied in Intergovernmental Agreements.

To see the communiqué from last meeting please click [here](#).

### **COAG Reform Council**

The Reform Council has been established by COAG as part of the arrangements for federal financial relations to assist COAG in driving its reform agenda. Independent of individual governments, the Reform Council reports directly to COAG on reforms of national significance that require cooperative action by Australian governments. In February 2011, COAG adopted a reform agenda built around five themes of strategic importance which all fall into the intersection of jurisdictional responsibilities. The five themes are:

- A long term strategy for economic and social participation
- A national economy driven by our competitive advantages
- A more sustainable and liveable Australia
- Better health services and a more sustainable health system for all Australians



- Closing the Gap on Indigenous disadvantage.

The COAG reform agenda is implemented through National Agreements, National Partnerships, Water Management Partnerships under the Agreement on Murray-Darling Basin Reform, and other intergovernmental agreements.

To see 'COAG reform agenda: report on progress 2011', click [here](#).

### **COAG Meeting 13 April 2012**

In the lead-up to the COAG meeting on 13 April 2012, the Reform Council has called on COAG to respond to the following issues:

- The COAG reform agenda
- Education and skills
- The seamless national economy

To see the COAG Reform Council's media release, click [here](#).

### **COAG Business Advisory Forum**

On March 6 2012 Prime Minister Julia Gillard announced the establishment of the COAG Business Advisory Forum. 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. The inaugural meeting of the COAG Business Advisory Forum will be held on 12 April 2012.

To see the Hawker Britton's Occasional Paper on the COAG Business Advisory Forum, click [here](#).

### **Council for the Australian Federation (CAF)**

The Council for the Australian Federation (CAF) was formed in October 2006 to provide an intergovernmental forum for State and Territory leaders. It aims to take a leadership role on key national policy issues that are not addressed by the Commonwealth Government. CAF comprises Premiers or Chief Ministers of all states and territories. Since its inception, CAF has generally held a meeting the day prior to each COAG meeting to allow the states and territories to work towards a common understanding of their positions in relation to policy issues involving the Commonwealth Government. The next CAF meeting will be held on Thursday 12 April 2012. CAF is currently chaired by Premier of South Australia Jay Weatherill.

For more details about CAF, click [here](#).



## **Current COAG members**

### **Prime Minister of Australia (Chair)**

Julia Gillard

### **Premier of New South Wales**

Barry O'Farrell

### **Premier of Victoria**

Ted Baillieu

### **Premier of Queensland**

Campbell Newman

### **Premier of Western Australia**

Colin Barnett

### **Premier of South Australia**

Jay Weatherill

### **Premier of Tasmania**

Lara Giddings

### **Chief Minister of the Australian Capital Territory**

Katy Gallagher

### **Chief Minister of the Northern Territory**

Paul Henderson

### **President of Australian Local Government Association**

Genia McCaffery