

Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates Hearing – February 2010

Department of Finance and Deregulation

Finance and Deregulation Portfolio

Outcome 1, Program 1.1

Topic: BRCWG

Question reference number: F74

Type of Question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 26 March 2010

Number of Pages: 2

Senator Ronaldson asked:

'A further task of the BRCWG is to ensure effective implementation of competition reforms agreed by COAG under the NRA.'

- a) What competition reforms have been agreed to by COAG under the NRA?
- b) What competition reforms that have been agreed to by COAG under the NRA that have been implemented, and what has been the date of implementation?
- c) What are the current time frames for the implementation of the competition reforms that have been agreed to by COAG under the NRA?
- d) What cost benefit analysis has been used to measure the financial impact of each of the competition reforms agreed to COAG under the NRA?

Answer:

- a) On 27 November 2008 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed the National Partnership Agreement to Deliver a Seamless National Economy. The agreement includes an implementation plan which covers 27 deregulation priorities, eight competition reforms and a continued commitment by all jurisdictions to regulatory reform. Some elements of the National Reform Agenda agreed by COAG in 2006 and 2007 have been incorporated in the implementation plan.
- b) In March 2008 and April 2009 the COAG Reform Council provided reports to COAG on the progress in implementing competition and regulatory reforms agreed under the National Reform Agenda.

On 23 February 2010 the COAG Reform Council released its report *National Partnership Agreement to Deliver a Seamless National Economy: Report on Performance 2008-09*. The report provides a summary of the status of progress on items on the implementation plan, including some National Reform Agenda elements previously agreed by COAG in 2006 and 2007.

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- c) Please see answer to F74(b) above.
- d) COAG requires that a Regulation Impact Statement (RIS) be prepared for agreements or decisions of COAG, Commonwealth-State Ministerial Councils and national standard setting bodies where these would have a significant impact on business. This requirement is set out in *Best Practice Regulation: A Guide to Ministerial Councils and National Standard Setting Bodies* (October 2007). The Guidelines provide that the RIS should “assess the costs and benefits of all the options supported by an acceptable level of evidence, where appropriate through a formal cost-benefit analysis” and that “after a decision is taken, the final RIS, which should be of a standard suitable for publication, will generally be made public”.