



MEDIA RELEASE

SENATOR THE HON NICK SHERRY

Minister for Small Business
Minister Assisting on Deregulation
Minister Assisting on Tourism

GILLARD GOVERNMENT WORKING TO DELIVER A SEAMLESS NATIONAL ECONOMY

In 2011, the Gillard Government's business regulation reform agenda is set to build on the strong progress made in 2010 towards delivering a seamless national economy, the Minister Assisting on Deregulation, Senator Nick Sherry, said today.

"The Gillard Government is working hard to cut red tape to make it easier to do business and is on track to drive further national reform in 2011," Senator Sherry said.

"This bold reform agenda recognises that Australia is one economy and should not operate as eight separate State and Territory markets with their own sets of business regulation.

"The reform process has been forced to confront some heavy baggage accumulated over more than a century - but we are making real progress in working to convert the old Federation-era rail gauge economy into the seamless national economy of the 21st century."

Together with the States and Territories, through the *National Partnership to Deliver a Seamless National Economy*, the Gillard Government is delivering regulatory reforms across 27 priority areas of business regulation.

"So far, 13 different reforms have been completed – that's around half the targeted reforms and the process is not due for completion until 2013," Senator Sherry said.

Completed reforms include:

- A national system of trade measurement
- A national system for registering health professionals
- National regulation of trustee corporations
- Standard business reporting - which makes it much simpler for businesses to manage their regulatory compliance obligations

A national consumer policy and product safety framework commenced on 1 January 2011.

"In addition to completing these reforms, substantial progress has been made towards finalising other reforms," Senator Sherry said.

“We’ve met key milestones in areas such as occupational health and safety, trades licensing and the National Construction Code.

“The Gillard Government looks forward to this strong progress continuing throughout 2011, and encourages all States and Territories to continue to work constructively with the Commonwealth to complete this important reform agenda in full by 2013.

“These reforms will have real and tangible benefits for the Australian economy and Australian businesses.

“The Department of Finance and Deregulation has estimated that 10 of the 27 reforms are worth about \$3.5 billion per year to the economy as a whole, with \$1.8 billion of this flowing to business.

“These reforms also represent the Gillard Government’s strong commitment to microeconomic reform, which builds on the considerable work of the Hawke and Keating Governments, in order to increase productivity, strengthen our economy and create more and better jobs,” Senator Sherry said.

A summary of completed reforms and key reform milestones that have been met is attached.

CANBERRA

6 January 2011

Media contact: Courtney Miller 0458 088 227

Attachment

Seamless National Economy – Completed Reforms

- 1) **Environmental Assessment:** This reform involved implementing bilateral assessment agreements to streamline Commonwealth-State environmental assessment and approval arrangements.
- 2) **Payroll Tax Harmonisation:** All jurisdictions are now harmonised in Stage One and Two areas, with the exception of WA. WA is harmonised in all Stage One areas and 8 out of 13 Stage Two reform areas, having indicated that it will not harmonise in the 5 remaining Stage Two reform areas.
- 3) **Health Workforce Agreement:** From 1 July 2010, the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) has been responsible for regulating each of the following professions - chiropractors, dental care, medical practitioners, nurses and midwives, optometrists, osteopaths, pharmacists, physiotherapists, podiatrists and psychologists. The Scheme replaced over 85 health profession boards governed by 66 Acts of Parliament.
- 4) **Trade Measurement:** From 1 July 2010, a single national trade measurement system replaced inconsistent State and Territory measurement systems and aligned Australian standards with the International System of Units.
- 5) **Rail Safety Regulation:** All jurisdictions have now passed model legislation, with finalisation of this reform only awaiting the gazettal of associated regulations in WA. This reform facilitates more consistent safety outcomes for the rail industry and reduces the compliance burden on rail operators in meeting different rail safety regimes.
- 6) **Consumer Policy Framework:** The Australian Consumer Law commenced on 1 January 2010 and provides for a national consumer protection framework, replacing 17 different and overlapping Commonwealth, State and Territory laws.
- 7) **Product Safety:** On 1 January 2011, a new national product safety regime commenced as part of the Australian Consumer Law. A single set of nationally consistent product safety laws now applies in all States and Territories, resulting in reduced compliance costs and improved certainty for businesses.
- 8) **Trustee Corporations:** A national regime for the licensing and supervision of trustee corporations commenced on 6 May 2010 and is fully operational. This reform created a national system for the licensing and supervision of trustee corporations, which reduces the regulatory burden on trustee corporations.
- 9) **Standard Business Reporting:** From 1 July 2010, SBR has been open for business, offering Australian businesses, accountants, bookkeepers, tax agents and payroll professionals a quicker and simpler way to complete and lodge reports for government.

- 10) National Regulation of Mortgage Broking:** A national regulatory framework for consumer protection regulation for mortgage broking commenced on 1 July 2010.
- 11) National Regulation of Margin Lending:** A national regulatory framework for consumer protection regulation for margin lending commenced on 1 July 2010.
- 12) National Regulation of Non-deposit Taking Institutions:** A national regulatory framework for consumer protection regulation for non-deposit taking institutions commenced on 1 July 2010.
- 13) Wine Labelling:** This reform harmonised State and Territory wine labelling requirements with World Wine Trade Group labelling requirements and ensures wine producers use the same labelling for wine intended for both domestic and international markets and facilitates greater access to international trade for Australian winemakers.

Seamless National Economy – Key Milestones Met

- 1) Occupational Health and Safety:** In December 2010, Safe Work Australia released model regulations and codes of practice for a four month public consultation period.
- 2) Trade Licensing:** The national law, the *Occupational Licensing National Act 2010*, received Royal Assent in Victoria on 28 September 2010, the host jurisdiction. Enactment of the national law established the National Occupational Licensing Authority (NOLA).
- 3) National Construction Code (NCC):** Following public consultation in August and September 2010, the NCC Working Group has completed the consolidation of building and plumbing regulations to be released publicly by May 2011.
- 4) Electronic Conveyancing:** The National E-conveyancing Development Limited (NECDL) was established in January 2010 as the legal entity overseeing the delivery of this reform, and has agreed a business plan to guide further implementation.
- 5) Food Regulation:** A Review of Food Labelling Law and Policy is currently in its final stages, after two rounds of public consultation, with a final report due to COAG in early 2011.
- 6) National Mine Safety Framework (NMSF):** In April 2010, the NMSF Steering Group finalised the development of National Enforcement Implementation Guidelines that will assist mining inspectors to adopt a consistent enforcement effort that is effective and efficient.