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The Productivity Commission

The Productivity Commission is the Commonwealth's principal review and advisory body on microeconomic reform. It conducts public inquiries and research into a broad range of economic and social issues affecting the welfare of Australians.

The Commission's independence is underpinned by an Act of Parliament. Its processes and outputs are open to public scrutiny and are driven by concern for the well-being of the community as a whole.

Information on the Productivity Commission, its publications and its current work program can be found on the World Wide Web at <http://www.pc.gov.au> or by contacting Media and Publications on (03) 9653 2244.

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Foreword

Governments use regulations to achieve a variety of worthwhile social and economic objectives. It is important, however, that the goals sought through regulation are clearly identified and that they are achieved in the most effective and efficient manner. Otherwise, the competitiveness of business and the productivity of the economy may be impaired, and community living standards diminished.

The Prime Minister, in *More Time for Business* (1997), outlined the Government's initiatives for regulation making and review. They expanded on earlier requirements to prepare Regulation Impact Statements (RIS) and cover most of the processes by which laws and regulations are developed. As well, the Council of Australian Governments has put in place two programs: to review existing legislation which restricts competition; and to ensure that Ministerial Councils and other national standard-setting bodies fully assess their regulatory proposals.

The Office of Regulation Review (ORR), within the Productivity Commission, has a central role in securing the implementation of these initiatives. The ORR is required to help ensure that all departments, agencies and national standard-setting bodies fulfil the requirements for new and amended regulations by providing guidance and training, as well as advising on the adequacy of RISs. It is also required to vet the terms of reference of the reviews of existing Commonwealth legislation.

The Government has asked the Productivity Commission to report annually on compliance with these regulation review initiatives. This is the first such report and forms part of the Productivity Commission's annual report series of publications for 1997–98.

The Commission is grateful for the cooperation of Commonwealth departments and agencies in providing information about their regulatory activity throughout the year.

Gary Banks
Chairman

Abbreviations¹

ABA	Australian Broadcasting Authority
ACCC	Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
ACM	Alternative Compliance Mechanism
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ACTBC	Australian Capital Territory Business Channel
AMSA	Australian Maritime Safety Authority
ANZFA	Australia New Zealand Food Authority
ANZFSC	Australia New Zealand Food Standards Council
ANTA	Australian National Training Authority
ASIC	Australian Securities and Investment Commission
AQIS	Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service
ATO	Australian Taxation Office
BIA	Business Impact Assessment
BLIS	Business Licence Information System
CASA	Civil Aviation Safety Authority
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
COAG Guidelines	<i>Principles and Guidelines for National Standard Setting and Regulatory Action by Ministerial Councils and Standard-Setting Bodies</i>
CPA	Competition Principles Agreement
DARTI	Department of Asian Relations, Trade and Industry (Northern Territory)
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

¹ Since the focus is on compliance in 1997–98, this report largely refers to the departments and their responsibilities as they were then, rather than to the changes in names and responsibilities which took effect late in 1998.

DISB	Department of Industries and Small Business (Northern Territory)
DIST	Department of Industry, Science and Tourism
DOCA	Department of Communications and the Arts
DPIE	Department of Primary Industries and Energy
IC	Industry Commission
LEAP	Livestock Export Accreditation Program
MCCA	Ministerial Council on Consumer Affairs
MCRT	Ministerial Council on Road Transport
NCA	National Crime Authority
NCC	National Competition Council
NEPC	National Environment Protection Council
NIA	National Impact Analysis
NOHSC	National Occupational Health and Safety Commission
NPRM	Notice of Prior Rule Making
NRA	National Registration Authority for Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals
NRTC	National Road Transport Commission
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
ORR	Office of Regulation Review
PC	Productivity Commission
PM&C	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
RAS	Rural Adjustment Scheme
RIS	Regulation Impact Statement
RRU	Regulation Review Unit (Tasmania)
SBDC	Small Business Development Corporation (Western Australia)
SSCRO	Senate Standing Committee on Regulations and Ordinances
ToR	Terms of Reference
TPA	<i>Trade Practices Act 1974</i>