



**Australian Government**  
**Productivity Commission**



# Benchmarking in Federal Systems

Roundtable Proceedings

Melbourne, 19-20 December 2010

Edited by:  
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# Foreword

Federal systems of government generally give rise to greater coordination problems and transaction costs than unitary states. Yet they can also yield important benefits, through the opportunities they provide for policy experimentation and learning across constituent jurisdictions. However, the latent potential for such inter-jurisdictional learning cannot be fully realised without relevant and accessible information. Australia has made some significant advances in this respect, but so too have other countries, which provides an opportunity for further learning at the international level.

The Productivity Commission was therefore pleased to join with the Forum of Federations to hold an international roundtable on *Benchmarking in Federal Systems*. The Roundtable took place in Melbourne in late 2010, bringing together government officials, academics and practitioners from Australia and a number of other countries. This volume provides updated and elaborated versions of the papers presented at the Roundtable.

The Roundtable provided the opportunity to compare Australian approaches to ‘benchmarking’ with those followed in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Germany, as well as at the European Union level. An introductory chapter by Professor Alan Fenna, who also co-edited the volume, provides a conceptual framework against which the different approaches can be considered.

The Commission is grateful to the Forum of Federations for the invitation to co-host the Roundtable, and to the participants, whose contributions made the Roundtable, and the production of this volume, a valuable exercise.

Gary Banks AO  
Chairman

June 2012



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