

## Part D Assistance for business cooperation

We have seen that a significant proportion of Australian firms are benefiting from business cooperation. We have also seen that firms encounter problems within their cooperative arrangements and that other, non-cooperating firms are put off business cooperation by a variety of factors.

It is time now to consider the role of the government, and other agencies, in business cooperation activities. Firms may not automatically form cooperative arrangements, even when they would be ultimately beneficial to the firm. The government, recognising the advantages that cooperative arrangements can provide, has become involved in assisting firms in their formation. Industry associations are also undertaking this role.

There are several aspects to the discussion of external assistance. First, to the extent that governments and business organisations are involved, what forms of assistance do they currently provide to firms? Second, how effective is the assistance, in terms of both its delivery and its effect on outcomes? Third, what do firms say they need in the way of external assistance to encourage cooperation? Finally, what does the discussion of these factors and the analysis in the rest of this report mean for future external assistance to business cooperation?

In Chapter 13 we examine the various forms in which external assistance for business cooperation is delivered. We also assess its effectiveness and discuss the types of assistance firms say they want from governments. Chapter 14 takes the analysis in the previous chapter one step further by considering the policy implications of the study's findings and developing recommendations for future external assistance to firms.

