

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates Hearing 27 May-6 June 2013

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Outcome/Program: 1.1 Prime Minister and Cabinet

Topic: COAG items

Senator: Senator Payne

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Question:

Ms Cross: If there are things that you are interested in that COAG agrees out of session, we could give you a list of what COAG has agreed out of session.

Senator PAYNE: I understand that in relation to the ministerial councils. But separately from that even over the past two years there have been items that have been initiated as COAG items that do not necessarily come onto the agenda at every COAG meeting. But one imagines—one hopes—that they are being dealt with by officials or by the process of first ministers or whatever it might be outside of the sessions.

Ms Cross: Yes. There are two categories of items. There are some that COAG commissions other bodies to take forward. In an effort to streamline the COAG agenda, they are not required to come back to COAG unless there is an issue that cannot be resolved. It would probably not be helpful to give you that list, because that would be a very long list. Then there are other piece of work that are commissioned for COAG where the expectation is that they will be brought back. Again, that may not be on the agenda at every meeting but we certainly track the things that are due back to COAG. We could give you the second list and that might be more useful.

Senator PAYNE: We try to do that do. But if you could provide me with a list that would be very helpful.

Ms Cross: Yes.

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Answer:

Action items currently identified to return to COAG for consideration are below. Some may be considered out-of-session.

Reform Area	Action Item	Return to COAG by
National Schools Reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree changes to the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations to enable the National Education Reform Agreement to operate. 	2013
National Disability Insurance Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise the indicative tables of support which detail the responsibilities of the NDIS. 	Mid-2013
Organised Crime and Gang Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Options to fight national gang violence and organised crime. Consider options for improving intelligence, data and information sharing between jurisdictions for the purpose of strengthening law enforcement action. Consider firearms measures. 	Next COAG meeting
Australia in the Asian Century White Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report on important initiatives occurring across jurisdictions to realise the benefits of the Asian century Report on strategies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boost studies of Asia and Asian language take-up in the short term in schools, including through increased use of the NBN; Work to build in-country partnerships and develop complementary skills and qualification assessment and recognition; and Increase Australia's participation in Asia's markets through providing services to assist food and agricultural exporters, and support two-way investment with the Asian region in food and food processing, related transport infrastructure, natural resource management and water conservation to drive the development of Australia's regional and remote areas, including across northern Australia and Tasmania. 	Next COAG meeting
COAG Reform Council: Presentation by the Chairman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider proposals raised by Mr Brumby to review COAG agreements and reporting to simplify the indicators to focus them on outcomes. 	2013

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Public Safety Mobile Broadband (PSMB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide advice on the establishment of an appropriate PSMB capability which will include advice on a new governance framework for the development of the PSMB, and on the Australian Communications and Media Authority's spectrum reservation for a PSMB network. 	Next COAG meeting
Mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a successor to the Fourth National Mental Health Plan. Develop the most appropriate set of national mental health indicators and targets against as many indicators as possible. Prepare a COAG response to the National Mental Health Commission's 2012 National Report Card on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention. 	Mid-2014 2013 Mid-2013
Energy Market Reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide advice on a strategy and implementation plan to deliver comprehensive demand side participation, drawing as appropriate on the Australian Energy Market Commission's Power of Choice review. 	Mid-2013
Future COAG Competition and Regulatory Reform Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report on a package of further competition and regulation reform options that could be considered by the Business Advisory Forum and COAG. 	2013
Reform Options from the Business Regulation and Competition Working Group and the Standing Council on Federal Financial Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide advice on the merits of additional reform in regard to land transport reform. Undertake further scoping on the proposed government services delivery reform and provide advice on the merits of additional reform 	2013
GST Distribution Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report back on the Report of the GST Distribution Review 	2013
Water Reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report on the next stage of water reform. 	2013