

Annual progress report: 2010–11

30 September 2011

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1. Introduction

The COAG Reform Council has been established by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) to report to COAG on the performance of governments under National Partnerships, National Agreements and other intergovernmental agreements. Further information about the COAG Reform Council and its secretariat is provided in Appendix A.

This document is the COAG Reform Council's Annual Progress Report for 2010–11.

This Annual Progress Report forms part of the council's governance framework and should be read in conjunction with the council's Charter and annual Business Plan.

The council measures its performance using three key mechanisms:

- first, the council conducts a qualitative analysis of its performance against its stated objectives and strategies
- second, the council assesses its performance against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), drawing on the results of an annual survey of COAG senior officials as well as some self reporting
- finally, the council has agreed to subject itself to a biennial external performance audit conducted by an independent auditor.

2. Progress against objectives and strategies

This section of the report presents a summary of the COAG Reform Council's achievements against its five objectives and their respective supporting strategies.

2.1 Assessing the performance of governments

Core Objective 1: Provide independent, evidence-based assessments of the performance of Australian governments

Strategy 1.1: Collaborate with jurisdictions, partner organisations and experts to access reliable and timely data and performance information

In 2010–11, the COAG Reform Council collaborated extensively with jurisdictions, partner organisations and data agencies to gather the data and performance information required to prepare its reports. Some of the ways in which the council receives inputs to its work are prescribed by COAG. In other instances processes have been developed by the council in consultation with governments.

In the case of reporting on National Agreements in 2010–11, the council received data from the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (the Steering Committee). The council also received some performance data directly from data collection agencies such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), the National Housing Supply Council, the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) and the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER). These reports also drew on information provided by governments, including annual reports on National Partnerships.

For National Partnerships with reward funding, the council consulted with governments to establish a data collation body at the beginning of the reporting periods. The council also sought the assistance of the Steering Committee in data collection where appropriate.

For reporting on the National Partnership Agreement to Deliver a Seamless National Economy, Water Management Partnerships and interim reports on capital city strategic planning systems, progress reports were provided directly to the council by governments (usually in the form of reporting templates prepared by the council to assist jurisdictions). In the case of the Water Management Partnerships, another key input was a report prepared by the National Water Commission on the progress of Basin States with water reforms. In the case of the cities work, the council also received input from the Expert Advisory Panel.

For all reports, in addition to the mechanisms for sourcing performance information and data described above, governments have been able to provide additional relevant information to the council as part of a formal consultation process. This important process enables jurisdictions to comment on matters of factual accuracy at the draft report stage.

Under the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations (IGA), the council is able to commission relevant experts to assist it in its work. The council has exercised this provision in a number of ways. For example, the council has entered into contracts with data agencies to assist with data quality assurance, contracts with academics or other experts to assist with conducting its good practice analysis, or consultants to assist with detailed analytical reviews of reform implementation.

The council has also utilised an expert advisory panel in its cities role, and the panel has been engaged directly in visits to each capital city and in shaping the content of a self-assessment template for governments, the formal reviews of each system and the continuous improvement program.

Further details about the council's processes for gathering inputs to its work can be found in the council's reports.

The council experienced one difficulty in receiving inputs during 2010–11. Jurisdictional reports on 'non-reward' National Partnerships are required to be compiled and provided to the council via the Commonwealth in accordance with C14A of the IGA. The council has experienced delays in the receipt of these reports. For example, as at 30 June 2011, performance information was available for four of the six National Partnerships which support the objectives of the National Education Agreement. As a result, the council was not able to report performance information which highlights the contribution of these three key National Partnerships.

The council has raised this issue in its report on the COAG reform agenda, and its 2010 performance reports on the National Education Agreement and National Agreement on Skills and Workforce Development.

Strategy 1.2: Assess the performance of governments on key reforms through tailored, evidence-based approaches

To ensure rigour and transparency for governments in the way in which the council will conduct its performance assessment task, the council has developed methodological frameworks for each of its core reporting tasks (incorporating those aspects prescribed by COAG). These frameworks are developed in consultation with governments and are reviewed from time to time as necessary to reflect any evolution in the council's approach to its work.

During 2010–11, the council:

- refined its methodological framework for reporting on National Agreements to reflect the second year focus of reporting change over time and continued to implement methodologies and consultation arrangements previously established for reporting on National Agreements and the Seamless National Economy National Partnership
- revised the assessment framework for National Partnerships with reward funding, which establishes the principles and timeframes for data collation and reporting
- issued a joint COAG Reform Council/National Water Commission progress assessment framework for reporting on Water Management Partnerships (in December 2010)

- developed a work plan tailored to its cities role, involving site visits, self-assessments by governments, two reporting phases and a continuous improvement program (issued in June 2010)
- refined its methodological framework for reporting on the COAG reform agenda (circulated May 2011).

In addition to the establishment of clear methodological frameworks for each stream of work, the council also strives to achieve rigour in its performance reporting work by conducting thorough consultative steps with governments. The council is required to consult on draft reports for a period of one full month. During this period, the council also conducts bilateral or multilateral consultations with jurisdictions as appropriate. These consultative steps are crucial to testing the accuracy of the facts presented in the council's reports and the veracity of proposed findings and recommendations.

The council also consults informally with relevant expert organisations on the development and implementation of methodological frameworks for its core reporting tasks where possible. For example, the council consults with the Productivity Commission in relation to reporting to COAG on microeconomic reforms, as the commission is an expert on some of these subjects.

Further details about the council's methodological approaches can be found in the council's reports.

Strategy 1.3: Deliver evidence-based reporting to COAG on the performance of governments

During 2010–11, the council has presented 13 reports to COAG, comprising:

- its annual report on the aggregate pace of reform across the whole COAG reform agenda (July 2010)
- its annual report on the Murray-Darling Basin Water Management Partnerships (September 2010)
- its annual report on the National Partnership to Deliver a Seamless National Economy (December 2010)
- six reports on the six National Agreements in the areas of education, skills and workforce development (September 2010), healthcare, disability, affordable housing and Indigenous reform (April 2011)
- a supplementary report to the National Indigenous Reform Agreement performance report on literacy and numeracy achievement (June 2011)
- three reports on National Partnerships with reward payments in the areas of elective surgery (November 2010), literacy and numeracy (March 2011) and essential vaccines (June 2011).

At COAG's request, the council also provided advice on early assessments of progress on two agreements—the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation and the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness. This advice was provided to COAG in July 2010.

As part of the first reporting phase of the council's review of capital city strategic planning systems, final interim reports for all eight capital cities were completed and circulated to all governments by 30 June 2011.

All reports were completed within the timeframes prescribed by COAG.

As at 30 June 2010:

- the Commonwealth had announced its reward funding decisions in relation to the council's reports on National Partnerships with reward payments in the areas of elective surgery and literacy and numeracy (a response to the report on essential vaccines was not expected by 30 June 2010)
- COAG had publicly responded to the council's report on the National Partnership to Deliver a Seamless National Economy.

On 10 June 2011, COAG responded to the council's report on the COAG reform agenda and six reports on the National Agreements (those completed in April 2010 and September 2010). These responses were publicly released on 19 August 2011.

At the time this report was finalised, COAG had not responded to the council's report on the Murray-Darling Basin Water Management Partnerships.

A full schedule setting out when reports were presented to COAG and released publicly, as well as links to Commonwealth or COAG responses, can be found on the council's website at: www.coagreformcouncil.gov.au/timeframes.cfm.

The recommendations made in the council's reports mainly focus on improvements to the performance reporting frameworks. The council has outlined some concerns about the timeliness and transparency of these processes in its report on the COAG reform agenda.

2.2 Enhancing public accountability

Core Objective 2: Enhance the public's ability to evaluate and drive performance across the COAG reform agenda

Strategy 2.1: Publish accessible information on the performance of governments across the COAG reform agenda

In August 2010 the council launched a new independent website.

The website is arranged thematically and has been designed to be readily accessible by the diverse range of stakeholders that may seek access to information on the performance of governments under the COAG reform agenda.

The website provides summary descriptions of the elements of the COAG reform agenda and links to the various intergovernmental agreements, so that stakeholders can gain access to the reform commitments of governments.

The ‘reports’ page of the website provides access to the council’s reports, provided in various accessible formats (both disaggregated and in full).

Stakeholders can also access media materials, newsletters and speeches released by the council, providing yet another, more condensed form of information about the performance of governments under the COAG reform agenda.

Strategy 2.2: Engage effectively with key stakeholders across the media, government, non-government and private sectors

The council developed and implemented a communications strategy and a stakeholder engagement plan for 2010–11.

Throughout the year, the council made substantial progress in its stakeholder engagement efforts.

Government engagement

The council has engaged with its government stakeholders through a multifaceted approach. This has included:

- a rolling program of meetings between the Chairman and first ministers
- a series of approximately eight regular teleconference updates between the council’s executive and COAG senior officials
- bilateral meetings with jurisdictions during the formal one-month consultation draft report stage
- specific-purpose bilateral and/or multilateral roundtables with jurisdictions to discuss methodological matters, identifying and promoting good practice, and approaches to continuous improvement
- site visits to capital cities to meet with representatives from State and Territory governments and stakeholders
- other ad hoc engagements to elicit and share information about reform progress.

Interest group engagement

During 2010–11, the council has extended its efforts to engage with peak interest groups.

In fulfilling the council’s core purpose of enhancing the accountability of governments to their communities, interest groups can represent various sectional interests within the community and therefore can play an important role (alongside the media) to act as proxies for the community.

The council seeks to engage interest groups through speaking engagements and meetings. For example, in 2010–11, the Chairman presented major addresses at the NatStats 2010 Conference in September 2010 and to the Committee for the Economic Development of Australia in February 2011.

During 2010–11, the council has extended and deepened its engagement with business groups interested in the microeconomic reform agenda and has commenced building its engagement with interest groups across the water management, cities and social policy aspects of the reform agenda.

Media engagement

The media is a stakeholder itself and a key communication channel to the council's broader stakeholders. Press articles about the council's work can play a major role in raising awareness of the role of the council, and encouraging understanding and discussion. Publicity through the media is fundamental to enhancing the public accountability of governments.

During 2010–11, the council sought to develop stronger relationships with journalists across a wider range of publications. The council has been successful in gaining a higher level of media interest in its role and work, including around the public release of reports and in the context of COAG-related stories. There were a total of 155 press references to the council, its reports, and/or its role over the past year. This is the council's highest annual total to date, and covers a broad range of national and metropolitan publications.

Strategy 2.3: Implement an accessible communications strategy to enable the public and stakeholders to drive performance across the COAG reform agenda

The council's 2010–11 communications strategy identified three key stakeholder groups—the media, governments and interest groups—and set out three key objectives:

- to raise awareness of the council's role in monitoring and assessing COAG's reform agenda among key stakeholder groups
- to build strong relationships with contacts across the Commonwealth, States, Territories and key partner agencies
- to publicise the council's reports, building interest in the findings to drive competition between governments, and influence better long-term policy outcomes.

In August 2010 the council launched a new independent website as a key communications channel, which has resulted in a substantial increase in both visitors and subscribers. The website includes:

- information about the COAG reform agenda, National Agreements and National Partnerships, and links to relevant external websites
- information about the council, its objectives and strategies, and its secretariat
- the council's reporting timetables and outcomes for completed and upcoming reports

- all of the council's reports released to date, provided in various accessible formats
- a media centre which includes media releases, speeches and newsletters.

2.3 Supporting COAG's capacity to drive reform

Core Objective 3: Assist COAG to develop and deliver its reform agenda

Strategy 3.1: Make recommendations to COAG on ways to improve the performance reporting framework

The IGA tasks the council with advising on where changes might be made to the performance reporting framework (IGA, c. C30). This role of making recommendations on performance reporting framework issues has featured prominently in the council's recommendations to COAG.

In its National Agreement reports, the council has made recommendations on matters such as:

- the conceptual adequacy of the relationship between objectives, outcomes, progress measures and outputs
- data quality, frequency of data collection and improvements to support 'change over time' data analysis
- the need for extra data disaggregation or better identification of a particular group or cohort
- developing clear and measurable targets to underpin performance measures.

COAG has announced that the performance frameworks of each National Agreement will be reviewed to ensure progress is measured and all jurisdictions are clearly accountable to the public and COAG for their efforts (COAG 2011, p. 2). The council has been advised that a steering group of COAG Senior Officials and the Heads of Treasuries will oversee the reviews and will consider the outstanding recommendations on the performance reporting framework in the council's baseline and second year reports on the National Agreements.

The council's advice presented in July 2010 on early assessments of progress on two agreements—the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation and the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness—also included recommendations on performance reporting framework issues.

The council's 2009 performance report on the Murray-Darling Basin Water Management Partnership made a number of recommendations on ways in which the performance reporting framework could be improved.

As part of the National Partnership on Literacy and Numeracy report, the council has made a number of recommendations to support improved public accountability for the second report. These recommendations address improved clarity and transparency of reporting, the level of ambition of targets and the process of reporting against achievement of targets. For example, the

council has asked that targets are transparent in the description of actual change being measured, that targets reflect observed trends from NAPLAN data and that data are verified prior to provision to the council. The council also recommended to COAG that it be consulted on the review of the reward framework for advice on clarity and transparency for public reporting. In announcing the reward payments available under the first year of the National Partnership on 28 June 2011, the Commonwealth Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth reinforced the council's call for improved clarity and transparency in targets for the next reward period (2011–2012).

The performance report for 2009–10 on the National Partnership to achieve a Seamless National Economy made a number of recommendations on improvements to the performance reporting framework, and recommended that COAG ask the Business Regulation and Competition Working Group to bring forward updated implementation plans before 31 March 2011, for approval by COAG by 30 June 2011. A revised implementation plan was agreed by COAG at the 19 August 2011 meeting.

In its report on the COAG reform agenda, the council noted that the work to be completed over the next nine months through these review processes should deliver significant outcomes under this commitment for continuous improvement of the performance reporting system.

Strategy 3.2: Highlight areas of good practice and performance to enable jurisdictions to adopt innovative reforms or methods of service delivery

The IGA tasks the council with highlighting examples of good practice and performance (IGA, c.A12).

The council committed to reporting on this task within relevant National Agreement reports from the second year onwards and a two-stage framework for highlighting examples of good practice and performance was agreed in April 2010.

In 2010–11, on the basis of the agreed framework, the council undertook stage one good practice projects for each of the six National Agreements—on Education, Skills and Workforce Development, Indigenous Reform, Affordable Housing, Health and Disability. For each of these, an independent consultant was engaged to perform the analysis and produce a report which has been published in the council's second year reports on each of the National Agreements (available on the COAG Reform Council website).

Following the completion and publication of the six stage one good practice projects, the council is conducting a program evaluation of the approach taken towards its good practice reference. In consultation with governments, this evaluation will inform how the council will undertake further work on good practice for the third year National Agreement reports.

Strategy 3.3: Report on the aggregate pace of activity in progressing COAG's reform agenda

The IGA tasks the council with monitoring the aggregate pace of activity in progressing COAG's agreed reform agenda (IGA, c.A11(d)).

The council presented its first report on the COAG reform agenda on 31 July 2010. This report was made after the initial 18 months of implementation of the COAG reform agenda. Given that this report was made in the early stages of implementation, the report made preliminary findings and recommendations about the overall pace of reform at that stage. The recommendations made in the report were broadly accepted by COAG.

During the remainder of 2010–11, the council has worked closely with the Commonwealth and State and Territory governments to develop and refine its methodological framework for its next report on the aggregate pace of reform, to be presented to COAG on 30 September 2011 (see the 2011–12 Business Plan).

2.4 Building excellence and creativity

Capability Objective 4: Become a centre of excellence on cross-jurisdictional performance reporting**Strategy 4.1: Promote an environment of constant learning through a program of events, engagement and continuous improvement**

As part of the council's strategy to promote an environment of constant learning, the Centre of Excellence program has focused its efforts in 2010–11 on establishing a series of expert speaker seminars and commencing a rolling program of internal evaluations of key elements of the council's work.

The Vantage Point seminar series was established in March 2011, with the aim of increasing the council and the secretariat's knowledge and understanding of relevant issues and events via access to leading thinkers and experts. Between March and June 2011, six seminars were held featuring a variety of speakers from government and academia.

Under the Centre of Excellence program, a series of internal reviews of key elements of the council's work commenced with a program evaluation of the council's role in highlighting good practice and performance. The evaluation began in March 2011. A thematic review of approaches to good practice was undertaken starting in April, and a survey of stakeholders was conducted throughout May. A facilitated workshop for government and academic practitioners working in the field of identifying and promoting good practice was held in June.

An internal review of the council's approach to National Agreement reporting commenced in May 2011. This review will critically examine the council's approach to National Agreement performance reports and consider ways to improve third year and future reports in order to enhance public accountability and the reports' value to stakeholders. Recommendations resulting from this review will be implemented in the council's reporting on National Agreements on a rolling basis, from the third year reports onwards.

Strategy 4.2: Use the council's unique and independent role to actively promote the importance of performance reporting and public accountability for federal financial relations

Activities under this strategy in 2010–11 have focused on identifying and supporting opportunities for collaborative work with partner organisations and promoting greater engagement of the council and secretariat in processes and events of relevance to the council's core business.

Greater engagement by the council and secretariat in key processes and events relevant to core business was promoted by the Centre of Excellence program in conjunction with other areas of the council's work. Council members and senior secretariat staff were involved in a range of key public and other events including: the Gilbert + Tobin Centre of Public Law's Federalism Research Roundtable; the Forum of Federations–Productivity Commission benchmarking in Federal Systems roundtable; and various events hosted by the Committee for Economic Development of Australia. The council also sought to constructively contribute to relevant public discussion by making a submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Audit's Inquiry into National Funding Agreements and appearing at a public hearing conducted as part of the inquiry.

2.5 Enhancing governance and organisational capability

Capability Objective 5: Develop and maintain efficient and effective processes that underpin a supportive and challenging workplace

Strategy 5.1: Effectively manage resources and ensure appropriate systems are in place to support the work of the council and the secretariat

The COAG Reform Council secretariat is established as an administrative unit within the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in order to receive corporate services support. In addition, the secretariat is supported by an Office Manager and a small onsite corporate services team to ensure that the department's systems are extended to the secretariat, as well as to provide internal corporate services support to the secretariat, the council and the Expert Advisory Panel on cities. Throughout 2010–11, the corporate services team has developed, implemented and maintained a range of corporate services support systems.

The COAG Reform Council budget for the 2010–11 financial year was \$7.3 million. Expenditure as at 30 June 2011 was \$6.3 million. The budget underspend was caused by a number of factors including: cities work commencing later than anticipated due to delays in appointing panel members; average staffing levels for the year being less than forecast; and costs for consultancies and contractors being less than forecast. States and Territories are invoiced for their percentage of actual expenditure only. Information about the council's forward budget and financial management strategy is provided in the council's 2011–12 Business Plan.

Strategy 5.2: Foster a culture of professionalism and high performance that supports learning and development opportunities for staff

The secretariat executive is committed to ensuring equitable access to opportunities for all employees and to developing a highly capable workforce through investing in its talent and leadership. This commitment extends to developing a workforce that possesses the depth and breadth of capabilities required to deliver strategic outcomes.

The secretariat has developed a capability management strategy to complement its performance management process. Capability development arrangements are reflected in performance agreements which strengthen the link between the capability development framework and the performance management and development scheme.

In addition, the Vantage Point seminar series established under the council's Centre of Excellence program will promote an environment of constant learning and provide opportunities for staff to extend their knowledge and engage with experts and opinion leaders.

Strategy 5.3: Implement and maintain effective and appropriate governance arrangements to structure and direct the work of the council and the secretariat

The council's Charter and Business Plan are the primary documents governing the work of the council and the secretariat. The Charter summarises COAG's decisions on the constitution and functions of the council, and sets out the council's objectives and strategies to deliver its mission. The council prepares a Business Plan each year which sets out more specific information about the council's forward work program. The council also prepares a progress report each year, setting out its achievements over the previous year against its objectives and strategies and against its KPIs. These documents are presented to COAG annually.

The secretariat has established a Governance Working Group to implement and maintain effective and appropriate governance arrangements. The working group deals with:

- corporate strategy and planning
- risk management
- compliance with statutory requirements
- council membership
- evaluation of performance.

3. Progress against key performance indicators

This section of the report presents a summary of the COAG Reform Council’s performance against the KPIs outlined in the council’s Business Plan.

Tables reproducing the full list of the council’s KPIs and presenting results against these KPIs are at Appendix B. Several of the KPIs rely on the results of a survey of COAG senior officials conducted in May 2011. All nine jurisdictions responded to the survey, which sought views on the performance of the council against its KPIs. Answers were sought using a six-point Likert Scale. The results of the survey are summarised in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Feedback from COAG senior officials

| KPI No. | Aspiration | 2009-10 result | 2010-11 result |
|---------|---|----------------|----------------|
| 1 | The council’s work assists COAG to drive and deliver its reform agenda. | 4.7 | 5.2 |
| 2 | The council’s evidence-based reporting is useful to jurisdictions. | 5.0 | 5.2 |
| 3 | The council’s work is enhancing the public accountability of governments to their communities | – | 5.2 |
| 4 | The council’s recommendations and findings are useful to jurisdictions. | 5.1 | 5.1 |
| 5 | The council’s recommendations on the performance reporting frameworks are useful to jurisdictions. | 5.2 | 5.1 |
| 6 | The council’s findings on good practice and performance reporting are useful to jurisdictions. | – | 3.9 |
| 9 | COAG Senior Officials are satisfied with the council’s methodologies (assessment and reporting frameworks). | 5.0 | 5.2 |
| 11 | COAG Senior Officials are satisfied with the council’s consultation processes. | 5.3 | 5.4 |
| 13 | The council’s reports are of high quality (readability, clarity, rigour). | 5.1 | 5.4 |

Overall, the council was pleased that jurisdictions provided generally positive feedback on its processes and the usefulness of its work. The comments reflected jurisdictional views that the performance reporting framework required further refinement and recognised the council’s valuable contribution to this process. One jurisdiction highlighted the council’s increasing focus on communications, for example through the establishment of the COAG Reform Council

website, and encouraged the council to continue to strengthen its communication strategies to promote public understanding of its reports.

The council's good practice work was referred to by several jurisdictions as an area where the council can improve its performance. Survey comments recognised that this was the council's first year reporting on good practice, but noted the mixed results of the projects completed to date. Jurisdictions supported the council's decision to review its approach to good practice.

Core objectives (KPIs 1–3)

The council's first three KPIs are high-level aspirational statements framed by the council's three core objectives on performance reporting, public accountability and supporting COAG.

Jurisdictions were generally very positive about the council's performance against these three high-level aspirations. The results for KPIs 1 and 2 were higher than last year. KPI 3 was measured for the first time this year and a very positive result was achieved.

Reports (KPIs 4 & 13)

Jurisdictions were very positive about the quality of the council's reports and the usefulness of the council's findings and recommendations. There was no change since 2009–10 in the council's performance rating against KPI 4, regarding the usefulness of the council's recommendations and findings.

The council achieved a higher rating than last year for KPI 13. The council believes in continuous improvement in the rigour and quality of its reports and will therefore strive to further improve the readability, clarity, rigour and usefulness of its reports to COAG over the next cycle.

Recommendations on performance reporting frameworks (KPI 5)

Jurisdictions were generally also positive about the council's recommendations on performance reporting frameworks but marginally less so than by comparison to the feedback on reports more generally. The council achieved a slightly lower result than last year for this KPI. The council will actively seek feedback from jurisdictions on how the council can make improvements in this aspect of its role.

Highlighting good practice and performance (KPI 6)

KPI 6 is a new measure, as the council only commenced its role of highlighting good practice and performance in reports on National Agreements during 2010–11.

This aspect of the council's performance was rated less positively than other aspects of the council's work. In their written comments, some governments acknowledged that this aspect of the council's work is still in the early stages of development.

The council is conducting a program evaluation of the approach taken towards its good practice reference. In consultation with governments, this evaluation will inform how the council will undertake further work on good practice in 2011–12.

The council's recommendations are accepted and implemented (KPIs 7 & 8)

Reporting on KPI 7 covers recommendations made in the council's reports released in the period from 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011. In this period, the council made a total of 36 recommendations to COAG. Of these, 29 (80.6%) were accepted, noted or referred to a working group; two recommendations (5.6%) were not accepted; and five recommendations (13.9%) have not yet been responded to.

Reporting on KPI 8 covers recommendations made in reports released in the period from 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010. In this period, ten recommendations were made to COAG. Eight recommendations have been implemented, although two of these (both from the 2008–09 report on the Seamless National Economy National Partnership) were implemented late. Two recommendations have only been partially implemented.

Assessment frameworks and consultation (KPIs 9–12)

Jurisdictions were generally positive about the council's methodological frameworks and consultative processes. The council achieved higher ratings than last year on these two measures. The council achieved a result of 100% for KPIs 10 and 12 relating to consultation and submission timeframes.

The council will continue with its efforts to be highly consultative with governments on its methodologies, draft reports and all other aspects of its work.

Communications (KPIs 14–18)

KPIs 14 to 18 measure the council's progress on external communications. These measures, presented in Appendix B, show that the council has increased its performance on all measures since 2009–10.

Next steps

The council appreciates and is encouraged by the feedback it has received from jurisdictions and will strive for continuous improvement in all aspects of its work. The council will take steps to engage with jurisdictions to better understand any concerns in relation to its work and processes and will address these concerns where possible, for example, by consulting further on methodological issues.

Appendix A – The COAG Reform Council

The council

The basis for the establishment of the COAG Reform Council is set out in its Charter.

In summary, the COAG Reform Council comprises six members: a Chairman appointed by the Commonwealth, a Deputy Chairman appointed by the States and Territories, and four members to be agreed by COAG, with at least one member having the appropriate skill sets with regional and remote experience. In addition, the council's Head of Secretariat, Ms Mary Ann O'Loughlin, is Executive Councillor.

The current members of the council and their terms are set out in Table A.1.

Table A.1 COAG Reform Council members

| Position | Member | Term |
|---|---------------------------|------------------|
| Chairman | Mr Paul McClintock AO | 13 April 2013 |
| Deputy Chairman | Professor Geoff Gallop AC | 31 December 2011 |
| Member (regional and remote experience) | Mr Peter Corish AM | 30 June 2014 |
| Member | Ms Patricia Faulkner AO | 30 June 2014 |
| Member | Mr John Langoulant AO | 13 April 2013 |
| Member | Mr Doug McTaggart | 30 June 2015 |
| Executive Councillor | Ms Mary Ann O'Loughlin | Ongoing |

Notes

1. Mr Peter Corish stepped down from his position on the COAG Reform Council on 30 September 2011

The secretariat

The COAG Reform Council's secretariat is led by three senior executives:

- Ms Mary Ann O'Loughlin is the Head of Secretariat
- Mr Paul Elton is the Deputy Head of Secretariat
- Mr Michael Frost is Executive Director, Cities Strategic Planning.

The secretariat is funded to comprise a core staff of 30 positions, with temporary additional funding for the cities work for up to six additional staff. The average staffing level throughout 2010–11 was 29.4 staff.

Appendix B – Performance against KPIs

Table B.1 reproduces the council’s KPIs from the Charter and presents the 2010–11 results against these KPIs.

The KPI framework relies on two data collection methods:

- self reporting
- a survey of COAG senior officials conducted in May 2011.

The survey of senior officials asked questions about the performance of the council framed around some of the KPIs in Table B.1. Answers were sought using a six-point Likert Scale as follows:

1. Strongly disagree
2. Moderately disagree
3. Tend to disagree
4. Tend to agree
5. Moderately agree
6. Strongly agree.

Table B.1 Report against KPIs

| KPI No. | KPI | Data method | Survey result for 2010-11 (survey responses on a 6-point scale) | | | | | | Result for 2009-10 | Result for 2010-11 |
|---------|--|---------------------------------|--|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | | | <i>Strongly agree</i> | <i>Moderately agree</i> | <i>Inclined to agree</i> | <i>Inclined to disagree</i> | <i>Moderately disagree</i> | <i>Strongly disagree</i> | | |
| 1 | The council's work assists COAG to drive and deliver its reform agenda. | Survey of COAG Senior Officials | 4 | 3 | 2 | - | - | - | 4.7 | 5.2 |
| 2 | The council's evidence-based reporting is useful to jurisdictions. | Survey of COAG Senior Officials | 3 | 5 | 1 | - | - | - | 5.0 | 5.2 |
| 3 | The council's work is enhancing the public accountability of governments to their communities | Survey of COAG Senior Officials | 5 | 2 | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | 5.2 |
| 4 | The council's recommendations and findings are useful to jurisdictions. | Survey of COAG Senior Officials | 4 | 2 | 3 | - | - | - | 5.1 | 5.1 |
| 5 | The council's recommendations on the performance reporting frameworks are useful to jurisdictions. | Survey of COAG Senior Officials | 4 | 3 | 1 | 1 | - | - | 5.2 | 5.1 |
| 6 | The council's findings on good practice and performance reporting are useful to jurisdictions. | Survey of COAG Senior Officials | 1 | 1 | 3 | 4 | - | - | - | 3.9 |

| KPI No. | KPI | Data method | Survey result for 2010-11 (survey responses on a 6-point scale) | | | | | | Result for 2009-10 | Result for 2010-11 |
|---------|---|---------------------------------|--|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | | | <i>Strongly agree</i> | <i>Moderately agree</i> | <i>Inclined to agree</i> | <i>Inclined to disagree</i> | <i>Moderately disagree</i> | <i>Strongly disagree</i> | | |
| 7 | The council's recommendations are accepted by COAG. | Self report | | | | | | | 100% | 80.6% |
| 8 | The council's recommendations are implemented by COAG/governments. | Self report | | | | | | | - | 80% |
| 9 | COAG Senior Officials are satisfied with the council's methodologies (assessment and reporting frameworks). | Survey of COAG Senior Officials | 3 | 5 | 1 | - | - | - | 5.0 | 5.2 |
| 10 | The council meets all consultation timeframes as specified by COAG. | Self report | | | | | | | 100% | 100% |
| 11 | COAG Senior Officials are satisfied with the council's consultation processes. | Survey of COAG Senior Officials | 6 | 2 | - | 1 | - | - | 5.3 | 5.4 |
| 12 | Council reports are submitted to COAG on time. | Self report | | | | | | | 100% | 100% |
| 13 | The council's reports are of high quality (readability, clarity, rigour). | Survey of COAG Senior Officials | 5 | 3 | 1 | - | - | - | 5.1 | 5.4 |

| KPI No. | KPI | Data method | Survey result for 2010-11 (survey responses on a 6-point scale) | | | | | | Result for 2009-10 | Result for 2010-11 |
|---------|--|-------------|--|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | | | <i>Strongly agree</i> | <i>Moderately agree</i> | <i>Inclined to agree</i> | <i>Inclined to disagree</i> | <i>Moderately disagree</i> | <i>Strongly disagree</i> | | |
| 14 | Number of citations of council reports. | Self report | | | | | | 2 | 25 | |
| 15 | Number of media references to the council, its reports, and its role. | Self report | | | | | | 29 | 149 | |
| 16 | Number of speaking/presentation invitations received for council to speak at conferences/forums. | Self report | | | | | | 38 | 47 | |
| 17 | Number of absolute unique visitors to the council's website. | Self report | | | | | | - | 20 116 | |
| 18 | Number of subscribers to the council's website. | Self report | | | | | | - | 721 | |

Notes:

1. KPI 7: the result reflects the percentage of recommendations that were released between 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011 that have been accepted. Of the total 36 recommendations made in this period: 20 (55.6%) were accepted; 1 (2.8%) was noted; 8 (22.2%) were referred to working groups; 2 (5.6%) were not accepted and 5 (13.9%) have not been responded to.
2. KPI 8: the result reflects the percentage of recommendations that were released between 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010 that have been implemented.
3. KPI 17: the result reflects absolute unique visitors to the website. Total visits were 36,456. Data is only available from website launch in mid-August 2010.