



MEDIA RELEASE

DR CRAIG EMERSON

Minister for Small Business, Independent Contractors and the Service Economy
Minister for Competition Policy and Consumer Affairs
Minister Assisting the Finance Minister on Deregulation

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NEW ACCESS RULES FOR NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE TO PROMOTE INVESTMENT AND COMPETITION

Parliament has passed a long-awaited package of reforms to Australia's rules governing access to nationally significant infrastructure to promote new investment and competition, the Minister for Competition Policy and Consumer Affairs, Craig Emerson, said today.

Dr Emerson said the National Access Regime is a statutory process allowing third parties to seek access to monopoly infrastructure of national significance – such as ports and railways – where it would be uneconomical for them to duplicate that infrastructure.

“These reforms will increase regulatory certainty for infrastructure owners, shoring up and encouraging vital investment in Australia's export infrastructure,” he said.

“At the same time they will reduce the time lags involved in deciding whether or not third parties can obtain access to existing export infrastructure, promoting competition in the national economy.

“There was broad consensus that changes were required to increase certainty and to speed up the decision-making process.

“Processes under the National Access Regime can go on for years - these reforms introduce binding time limits for decision makers and streamline the review processes.

“The Government will monitor the impact of the reforms and, in due course, review the effectiveness of the changes.”

The legislation also allows infrastructure owners to seek upfront decisions about the eligibility for declaration as an asset to which third-party access might be sought – before the infrastructure is built.

It also allows fixed principles in access undertakings to ensure longer-term certainty about the access arrangements that will apply to major infrastructure facilities.

Media contact: Carly Learson, Minister's Office, 0466 262 111