

The Hon Dr Craig Emerson MP

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Media Release

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OECD STUDY HIGHLIGHTS NEED FOR BUSINESS DEREGULATION

Australia is the poorest performing country in the Western world when it comes to **regulatory harmonisation** a new report has found.

Lindsay Tanner and Dr Craig Emerson, the Commonwealth Ministers responsible for business deregulation, said the latest report of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) highlights the urgent need for regulatory reform.

"The OECD has found that Australia has the least harmonised regulation among the 30 countries profiled," Mr Tanner said.

"This is based on data from 2003 and since then the regulatory burden has become much worse.

"Clearly this burden is restricting Australian businesses from reaching their full potential and the Rudd Government is determined to reverse the pile-up of new regulation."

Dr Emerson said the report also finds Australia could still increase GDP per capita by more than 1 per cent or more than \$10 billion.

"The report encouragingly says we have an open economy as an island nation but if you asked any business owner if they are over-regulated I think the answer would be an emphatic 'yes'," he said.

Dr Emerson said the Commonwealth, State and Territory Business Regulation and Competition Working Group met for the third time in Canberra yesterday to look at ways to slash the red tape that is strangling business.

"We'll be taking to the next COAG meeting a plan to accelerate work on regulatory hotspots and take on a bold new agenda of reform," Dr Emerson said.

"Australia needs the Commonwealth, States and Territories to harmonise key areas of business regulation such as occupational health and safety, payroll tax, trade licences and regulation of credit."

Dr Emerson said the Business Council of Australia has made it clear that in the last decade Australian businesses have been suffering from "creeping re-regulation".

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