



Barry O'Farrell MP
NSW Premier
Minister for Western Sydney



Ted Baillieu MLA
Victorian Premier
Minister for the Arts

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW and Victorian governments agree to work together to drive reform

NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell and Victorian Premier Ted Baillieu today agreed to jointly accelerate economy-boosting reforms between Australia's two largest states, especially in the areas of energy efficiency and skills.

The Premiers today established the Interstate Reform Partnership between NSW and Victoria, to get on and achieve cost-saving and investment-attracting reforms quickly that otherwise could take years to accomplish through some national structures.

The agreements are the first outcomes of a formal Interstate Reform Partnership, established by the two Premiers to advance a joint reform agenda to:

- promote economic growth and competitiveness,
- make it easier to do business and invest in both states, and,
- put downward pressure on the cost of living and the cost of running a business.

The reforms are significant as the two states account for 57 per cent of Australia's population and 54 per cent of the nation's GDP.

The NSW and Victorian governments today resolved to align the energy efficiency schemes in both states.

While the schemes are broadly similar, there are differences in their administration and other details which add costs for participants operating across both states.

This move will place downward pressure on energy cost increases by reducing compliance costs for energy retailers among other measures.

A joint taskforce will report back to the Premiers with recommendations by late 2012.

The Premiers also agreed to jointly pursue skills reforms, particularly in the area of apprenticeships, to benefit employers and apprentices and improve productivity by matching qualified apprentices with areas of unmet demand.

As a first step, the Premiers agreed to various actions to improve the take-up of competency-based completions and transferability and alignment of training contracts between jurisdictions.

Further, the Premiers noted the importance of international students to the economies of both states and agreed to maximise opportunities to reduce red tape, including extending streamlining visa applications for high-quality, low-risk education providers like TAFE institutes.

Both states affirmed their ongoing commitment to COAG and other national processes, but stressed that where there was an opportunity to achieve reform faster, together, they would take that opportunity.

The two Premiers will continue to work on further opportunities to reduce costs and attract business and investment to their states, and the nation.

Victoria and NSW welcome any other states or territories who wish to participate in these reform initiatives.

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