

# Ministerial Council on Energy

## Energy Market Reform - Bulletin No. 172

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### **Release of Energy Technical and Safety Harmonisation Enhancement Plan and decision Regulatory Impact Statement**

In November 2007, the Commonwealth Government committed to work with State and Territory governments and the energy supply sector to improve the consistency of state-based regulations (such as occupational health and safety requirements) that apply to the energy sector.

At its 13 June 2008 meeting, the Ministerial Council on Energy (MCE) agreed to establish the Energy Technical and Safety Leaders Group (the Leaders Group) to develop an Energy Technical and Safety Regulation Harmonisation Enhancement Plan.

The Leaders Group released a Discussion Paper in February 2009 and this was followed by release of the Draft Energy Technical and Safety Harmonisation Enhancement Plan released in September and a workshop held in October 2009.

Following consultation, the Leaders Group has developed a final version of its Energy Technical and Safety Regulation Harmonisation Enhancement Plan (Final Plan). The Final Plan has refined some of the earlier proposals, including those on the structure of governance bodies and the legislative approach to implementing the proposed harmonised framework. The Leaders Group has proposed an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) as the means of delivering national harmonisation to energy technical and safety regulation.

Central to the proposed IGA would be commitments to a series of overarching principles and objectives supporting harmonisation, including: the adoption of a nationally consistent standard for Energy Network Safety Schemes (ENSS); mutual recognition of an ENSS; and amendments to existing legislation to achieve greater harmonisation. The implementation of this framework is recommended to be overseen by an Energy Supply Industry Safety Committee to be established by and report to the MCE via the Standing Committee of Officials.

At its 4 December 2009 meeting, MCE noted the Final Plan and the findings of the associated decision Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS). Ministers agreed in principle to those aspects of the Final Plan within their Ministerial portfolio responsibilities, and to work with their jurisdictional colleagues, as required, to progress the recommendations in the Final Plan. Ministers remain determined to maintain the momentum set by the Leaders Group in implementing this important reform.

The Final Plan and associated decision RIS are available at [www.mce.gov.au](http://www.mce.gov.au)

