

Ministerial Forum: The Future of Competition Reforms in eConveyancing

On 24 March 2026, relevant State and Territory Ministers and their representatives¹ met to review the future of competition reforms in eConveyancing. This followed the publication of ARNECC's two independent reports, being a Functional Requirements Review (FRR) of the direct connect model of interoperability and a Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) of different competition models (including interoperability). The FRR and CBA were commissioned by ARNECC to assist in determining the future of interoperability and how best to support a sustainable, competitive market structure for eConveyancing.

Relevant State and Territory Ministers and their representatives last met on eConveyancing reforms at a Ministerial Forum on 11 June 2024 to review the progress of the interoperability reform. At that time, the Ministers acknowledged the considerable work ARNECC and industry stakeholders had undertaken in progressing interoperability, while also noting the significant challenges raised by the banking industry regarding the Interoperability Program, some of which were beyond the remit of States and Territories to address effectively. Ministers acknowledged then the need for Commonwealth Government and regulator assistance in resolving those challenges.

In September 2024, ARNECC announced that it was pausing the design, build and test working groups for its Interoperability Program given the significant challenges faced by the Program, which ARNECC was unable to resolve. Considerable work has been undertaken since then to assist in determining the appropriate next steps for the reform.

Ministers in attendance at the March 2026 Forum noted some key conclusions drawn from an analysis of the FRR and the CBA reports:

- The time, cost and complexity of implementing interoperability, regardless of the model.
- The high level of uncertainty that interoperability (regardless of the model) can deliver significant long-term benefits (including competition outcome benefits).
- The absence of an incentive for participation, active leadership, support and cooperation by the banks.
- The need for leadership, participation, full support, and cooperation of the Commonwealth Government and its regulatory authorities as responsible entities, for the interoperability program (or any model) to succeed including mandating bank participation in any reform (where appropriate).

The FRR and CBA reports are consistent in highlighting the need for Commonwealth involvement if the challenges faced by interoperability are to be addressed.

Ministerial decisions

On the basis of the outcomes of the FRR and CBA reports, and noting the criticality of Commonwealth Government and agency involvement in any reform, State and Territory Ministers have endorsed the following actions recommended by ARNECC:

- Without Commonwealth Government support, ARNECC will not proceed with the Interoperability Program at this time, including not proceeding with implementing direct connect interoperability, the practitioner choice interoperability model or the other models for competition considered in the CBA report.
- ARNECC will continue to strengthen the eConveyancing regulatory regime to deliver better outcomes for industry, and work with other regulatory authorities and market participants to close any gaps in the regime.

¹ Following the South Australian State election on 21 March 2026 the returning Labor Government is yet to form Cabinet and have not endorsed any Decisions made in this Forum.

State and Territory Ministers have agreed to again formally request engagement from the Commonwealth Government and its agencies to deliver improved competition and more effective regulation of the eConveyancing industry.

Next Steps

- State and Territory Ministers support ARNECC continuing to enhance the existing eConveyancing regulatory regime, informed by work it is currently conducting in the regulatory requirements uplift review process, and for ARNECC to continue to work with other regulatory authorities and market participants to close any gaps in the existing eConveyancing regulatory regime. This includes continuing to work with the Commonwealth Government and its regulatory authorities.
- Ministers appreciate the criticality of the Commonwealth Government and its regulatory authorities supporting reform in the eConveyancing industry and engaging with ARNECC to enhance the eConveyancing regulatory regime, particularly in the areas of bank financial settlements processes and national competition. Ministers would welcome this engagement from the Commonwealth Government as an immediate next step.

Ministers acknowledged the considerable work that was undertaken within the Interoperability Program, and thanked ARNECC for its continued leadership in establishing and maintaining the national regulatory framework for eConveyancing. Ministers also thanked industry stakeholders for the contribution they have made to industry reform to date, and for their ongoing contribution of time, expertise, and resources to eConveyancing.

State and Territory Ministers in attendance or represented at the Forum

ACT: Tara Cheyne MLA, Attorney-General, Minister for Human Rights, Minister for City and Government Services, Minister for the Night-Time Economy

NSW: The Hon. Jihad Dib MP, Minister for Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Youth Justice (Chair)

NT: The Hon. Marie-Clare Boothby MLA, Attorney-General, Minister for Tourism and Hospitality, Minister for Major Events, Minister for Parks and Wildlife, Minister for Racing, represented by Christopher Cox, Registrar-General

QLD: The Hon. Dale Last MP, Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, Minister for Manufacturing and Minister for Regional and Rural Development

SA: Following the South Australian State election on 21 March 2026 the returning Labor Government is yet to form Cabinet and have not endorsed any Decisions made in this Forum.

TAS: The Hon. Madeleine Ogilvie MP, Acting Minister for Parks, Minister for Environment, Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy, Minister for Community and Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Arts and Heritage, represented by Mr Stuart Fletcher, General Manager, Land Tasmania

VIC: The Hon. Sonya Kilkenny MP, Attorney-General, Minister for Planning, represented by Brigid McCarthy, Acting Chief of Staff

WA: The Hon. John Carey MLA, Minister for Planning and Lands; Housing and Works; Health Infrastructure, represented by the Hon. Dr Katrina Stratton, MLC, Parliamentary Secretary