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***The Productivity Commission***

The Productivity Commission, an independent Commonwealth agency, is the Government's principal review and advisory body on microeconomic policy and regulation. It conducts public inquiries and research into a broad range of economic and social issues affecting the welfare of Australians.

The Commission's independence is underpinned by an Act of Parliament. Its processes and outputs are open to public scrutiny and are driven by concern for the wellbeing of the community as a whole.

Information on the Productivity Commission, its publications and its current work program can be found on the World Wide Web at [www.pc.gov.au](http://www.pc.gov.au) or by contacting Media and Publications on (02) 6240 3239.

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Commission photograph

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## Acknowledgment

The Commission wishes to thank its staff for their continued efforts, commitment and support during the past year.

## Annual report series

The Commission is also releasing the following companion publications as part of the annual report series:

### *Regulation and its review 1998-99*

This report assesses compliance with the Government's requirements for regulation impact analysis and reports on the activities of the Office of Regulation Review.

### *Trade and assistance review 1998-99*

This report contains the Commission's latest estimates of agricultural, manufacturing and budgetary assistance for Australia and presents new estimates of barriers to trade in selected services for Australia and its trading partners.

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## Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AIRC	Australian Industrial Relations Commission
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (forum)
APS	Australian Public Service
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CCNCO	Commonwealth Competitive Neutrality Complaints Office
EPAC	Economic Planning Advisory Commission
ESD	Ecologically sustainable development
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GTE	Government trading enterprise
IC	Industry Commission
IPART	Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of New South Wales
NSW	New South Wales
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ORR	Office of Regulation Review
PC	Productivity Commission
RIS	Regulation Impact Statement
R&D	Research and development
US	United States of America
WTO	World Trade Organization