

# ANZSOG Case Program

## The National Occupational Licensing Project (C)

2016-177.3

In November 2013, the New South Wales Government Licensing System delivered the public search function of the National Licensing Register. It was described by test users as excellent and fit for the purpose it had been designed for.

However, no-one would be able to use it, despite the millions of dollars that had been spent on its development, and the resources expended by individual states and territories for their existing systems to interface with it. That same month the final report on COAG Seamless National Economy reforms – delivered to a newly elected Coalition government under Tony Abbott – described success in most areas but described some reforms as ‘ambitious in scale’.

On 13 December 2013, COAG decided not to proceed with arguably one of the most ambitious, the National Occupational Licensing System. As National Occupational Licensing Authority (NOLA) deputy chief executive, Barbara El-Gamal’s role was now to dismantle the organisation she had barely had time to set up (among her tasks was to prepare a paper for the Productivity Commission outlining what had happened and suggesting reasons why). In support the NOLA skeleton staff prepared a comprehensive compendium detailing all aspects of the project.

On 1 August 2014, NOLA ceased to exist. The way forward would be through enhanced mutual recognition, to be advanced by the Council for the Australian Federation, an intergovernmental forum established by the States and Territories with no Commonwealth government representation. However, there would be no central record of licensing to refer to.

This case study has been written by Janet Tyson for Dr Michael Di Francesco, Australia and New Zealand School of Government. It has been prepared as a basis for class discussion rather than to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of a managerial situation. The contributions of Milton Cockburn, Barbara El-Gamal, Amanda Lynch, Gary Newcombe, Rod Stowe, Peter Tighe, and Julie Yeend is acknowledged, but final responsibility for the material rests with the author.

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## Exhibit 1 Media Releases

### COAG PULLS THE PLUG ON THE NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING SYSTEM

A brave attempt at microeconomic reform, by achieving greater labour mobility around Australia, ended last Friday when the Council of Australian Governments terminated the National Occupational Licensing System. NOLS was supposed to be a major outcome of the ‘**seamless national economy**’ initiative adopted by COAG in 2008 but instead NOLS fell victim to misinformation, state jealousies and the protection of vested interests. Instead the states and territories are to take over the task of trying to improve labour mobility across state borders, something they have failed to achieve in 113 years of Federation.

- *Source: Shoptalk, Issues and news affecting the Australian Shopping Centre Industry, published by the Shopping Centre Council of Australia, Thursday 19 December 2013.*

### COMMONSENSE PREVAILS ON NATIONAL LICENSING

The President of the Real Estate Institute of Australia, Peter Bushby, applauds the decision by COAG to can the proposed National Occupational Licensing Scheme reform in favour of a sensible and workable solution.

“Australia’s 118,000 real estate professionals are happy that COAG has delivered them an early Christmas present. The decision reflects what REIA and its members have been saying for the last 18 months that the proposal did not deliver the expected benefits and that there is a better way to achieve them.”

- *Source: Media Release, Real Estate Institute of Australia, 13 December 2013.*