

**COAG, DEMOCRACY AND THE AUSTRALIAN
CONSTITUTION: YOU CAN CHOOSE TWO**

by

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ABSTRACT

A 'democratic deficit' has been well identified in the operations of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). This has previously been identified as a primarily political problem. However, perhaps there is more to the story. If COAG is fulfilling a constitutional role as well as a political role, the consequences of its democratic deficit could be far more wide-reaching, threatening the democratic integrity of the constitutional system. In order to determine whether this is the case, this thesis will do two things. First, it will establish whether COAG is a constitutional convention. If this is the case, COAG will be fulfilling a constitutional role and should be considered part of the constitutional framework. Second, this thesis will extrapolate what the consequences of the democratic deficit would be if COAG was a constitutional institution rather than a political one. Answers to these questions will be crucial in developing our system of government to accommodate both democracy and federalism. To do nothing would see democracy further sacrificed in the face of federalism.

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DECLARATION

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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