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Ian Hamilton:

Hi, all. My name is Ian Hamilton. I'm from the Federal Financial Relations Branch in Treasury in the Economic and Revenue Analysis Division. I've been the acting director for the last four months, but I'm very happy to welcome back to our branch Andre Wheeler, who's our permanent director who's back from dealing with the last crisis before COVID, bushfire recovery.

The sort of things we've been dealing with in recent times and continue to is a very heightened pace of inter-governmental meetings, up to four a week, either at the Treasurer's level or Heads of Treasury or Deputy Heads of Treasury, as we all around the country at state and the Commonwealth all try to grapple with the challenges of first, the response, the economic response to COVID-19, and now more lately the recovery phase and trying to get the economy back on its feet and undertake some level of reform that puts us in the best shape to recover from the crisis.

A big ticket item on our agenda right this week is the home builder program from the Commonwealth, announced last week, where they have kindly asked the states to administer and implement that program. So there is some furious work going on trying to negotiate with the Commonwealth a set of arrangements whereby it's practical and workable to implement home builder and get the grant out the door quickly to those who might want to use it and help stimulate the housing and construction industry.

Secondly, the other big picture issue is that small matter of the demise of COAG, the Council of Australian Governments and the rise of the new National Federation Reform Council, which includes a fairly enhanced role for Treasurers, from what we can tell. We're waiting to sort out the detail on that and doing a lot of thinking about what the risks and opportunities are for New South Wales. As well, we're continuing our normal work, forecasting GST revenue, which is hard enough at the best of times, but in this significant area of revenue for New South Wales, it's obviously all the harder given the uncertainty around how quickly we can lift ourselves out of the crisis and COVID-19. That's all for me. Thanks for listening.