

MINISTERIAL COUNCIL ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE
30 JUNE 2010
MEETING COMMUNIQUE

The Ministerial Council on International Trade held its third meeting in Sydney today, kindly hosted by the New South Wales Government.

Attendees

The Hon Anthony Byrne MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Trade, who chaired the meeting, was joined by:
Mr Andrew Cappie-Wood, Chief Executive, Chief Minister's Department, ACT
The Hon Steve Whan MP, Minister for Primary Industries, Emergency Services and Rural Affairs, NSW
The Hon Rob Knight MLA, Minister for Trade, Northern Territory
Mr Michael Choi MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Trade, Queensland
Mr Lachlan Bruce, A/g Chief Executive, Department of Trade and Economic Development, South Australia
Ms Lara Giddings MP, Minister for Economic Development, Tasmania
Ms Jaala Pulford, Parliamentary Secretary for Industry and Trade, Victoria
The Hon Bill Marmion MLA, Minister for Commerce; Science and Innovation; Housing; Minister Assisting the Treasurer, Western Australia
The Hon Tim Groser MP, Minister of Trade, New Zealand

Welcome to New Zealand

Ministers welcomed New Zealand's inaugural participation in the Council, represented by the Hon Tim Groser MP, Minister of Trade, and highlighted the importance and depth of the bilateral relationship between Australia and New Zealand. Ministers agreed that New Zealand's participation in the Council would foster greater cooperation between the two countries in trade and investment issues of common interest.

The Doha Round

Ministers acknowledged the importance they attach to bringing the Doha Round to a balanced and ambitious conclusion and their support for efforts to expedite the remainder of the negotiations.

Free Trade Agreements

Ministers noted the current status of Australia's free trade agreements under negotiation and consideration and expressed support for ongoing efforts to conclude agreements.

Trade and Promotion in ASEAN and Cooperation with New Zealand

Ministers welcomed the entry into effect of the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (AANZFTA) on 1 January 2010 and noted the work undertaken by the Commonwealth and States and Territories to identify priorities for cooperation on trade and investment promotion in key sectors and markets across ASEAN. They also noted the work undertaken by Australia and New Zealand to identify initiatives to foster closer collaboration on trade and investment promotion in ASEAN countries aimed at maximising outcomes from AANZFTA.

Brand Australia

Ministers welcomed the launch of Australia's new national brand, *Australia Unlimited*, and noted the extensive research program undertaken across 14 international markets, including Australia, that underpinned the selection of the winning concept. Ministers discussed options to leverage the brand in order to project a consistent message internationally about Australian skills, capabilities and trade and investment opportunities. States and Territories agreed to work with Austrade to identify how they can align with, and use, Brand Australia to support their international trade and investment programs and activities.

Shanghai World Expo

Ministers noted the positive outcomes achieved by the Australian pavilion at Shanghai World Expo 2010 during its first months of operation, including highlighting and promoting Australian-China trade and investment, strengthening institutional and people-to-people ties, and projecting positive images of contemporary Australia.

New Australian Government Arrangements for the Promotion of International Education Services

Ministers noted the arrangements for the transfer of responsibility to Austrade on 1 July 2010 for the marketing and promotion of international education. Ministers highlighted the important contribution of education exports to the economy and emphasised the importance of ensuring a smooth transition of the functions.

Whole-of-Government Measures to Address Current Challenges in the International Education Services Sector

Ministers acknowledged that the rapid growth in the international education services sector had generated challenges for governments in relation to education quality, student welfare and the regulatory framework. Ministers noted the International Student Strategy for Australia and the Baird Review as complementary elements of governments' responses to these challenges. The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) International Student Strategy will give students more support and information,

and better protect their rights. The Commonwealth Government's response to the Baird Review, announced on 23 June, will improve the regulatory framework and consumer protection arrangements. Together, the Baird response and the International Student Strategy support the objective of providing a high-quality experience to international students and a sustainable future for quality international education in Australia.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure Australia provided an update to Ministers on the implementation of the national ports and freight strategies and on Infrastructure Australia's audit and priority list. Ministers stressed the importance of prioritising infrastructure projects which will improve productivity and international competitiveness, thereby boosting trade performance.

Mulesing: Trade implications for Australian wool exports

Ministers continued to encourage the wool industry to better coordinate and communicate its approaches to mulesing issues throughout the wool supply chain, from grower to retailers. All Australian governments agreed to use their international representatives to support the industry in communicating to the market the availability of non-mulesed wool and progress in phasing out mulesing.

Trade and Investment Development

Ministers noted Austrade's work on a number of trade and investment development issues including:

- a review of Austrade's onshore operating arrangements;
- implementing the new TradeStart program;
- ensuring the smooth transition of responsibility for promotion of Australian education internationally; and
- the implementation of the Brand Australia program.

In particular, Ministers agreed to refresh the categories for the Australian Export Awards program which is delivered in partnership with State and Territory Governments.

Ministers also agreed to the proposal to establish a permanent National Trade Development Working Group following the success of the Joint Working Group which was established for the purpose of implementing the recommendations of a report on increased collaboration in trade promotion activities between the Commonwealth and States and Territories. The Working Group will operate as a working-level consultative forum on trade development matters and will comprise representatives from Austrade (as the Chair) and State and Territory Governments.

Ministers also noted that the Australian Export Awards categories have not undergone a major review since 1963 and agreed that a refreshing of the categories to better reflect

government priorities and modern business was necessary. Consequently, Ministers agreed that Austrade should continue to work with State and Territory Governments to contemporise the Australian Export Award categories.

Ministers noted the recent release of a report into the impact of foreign direct investment in Victoria. Victoria presented the key findings of the report, which included the substantial benefits from foreign direct investments.

Ministers also noted Victoria's presentation on the upcoming Latin America Vision Statement, expected to be released shortly.

Export Finance Navigator

Ministers noted a paper by the Export Finance and Insurance Corporation on the Export Finance Navigator - an online tool to assist current and potential exporters on financing options. Ministers believed the Export Finance Navigator would be a valuable addition to the resources available to small and medium-sized enterprises seeking export finance and would help provide a more solid financial foundation to businesses.

Ministerial Council Review

Following COAG's decision to streamline the COAG Ministerial Councils, Ministers considered other ways in which to facilitate cooperation between the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments on measures to enhance Australia's trade performance and international competitiveness. Ministers agreed to continue to hold meetings outside the COAG process to carry forward the identified work program of the MCIT.