



The Government is reforming the end-to-end trade environment to make cross-border trade easier for Australian businesses

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For Australian businesses looking to export or import, the process can be expensive and time-consuming, with multiple government jurisdictions and regulations to navigate. Meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic has both exacerbated operating costs for business and accelerated interest in digital solutions.

In the 2020-21 Budget, the Australian Government announced the Simplified Trade System, a whole-of-government microeconomic reform to simplify Australia's international trade regulations and strengthen Australia's economic resilience. The 2021-22 Budget provided an additional \$37 million to invest in this reform agenda.

The Simplified Trade System will make cross-border trade easier and less costly for Australian businesses. Trade regulations will be streamlined, supported by the introduction of more modern ICT systems.

The trade agenda will also support Australia's economic recovery by promoting trade growth and diversification and boosting productivity.

Implementation Taskforce to coordinate trade reform

The Simplified Trade System Implementation Taskforce (Taskforce) was set up in mid-2021 to coordinate the reforms. The dedicated Taskforce was established to cut red tape and progress toward a simplified, tell-us-once digital model for government-business interactions for importers and exporters.

The Taskforce's deliverables include reviewing regulations and ICT systems affecting Australia's cross-border goods trade, mapping the end-to-end journeys

for importers and exporters, coordinating and aligning delivery of existing Simplified Trade System measures, and identifying opportunities for future regulatory reform and a more integrated investment approach across trade systems.

We are considering global best practice, and lessons from our international trading partners. We are also taking a national approach and looking to align with cross-border trade reform initiatives underway in states and territories.

As we continue to review the end-to-end trade environment, we will identify opportunities for improvement – be it regulatory, ICT or process-related – that will inform the Government's work towards supporting Australian businesses to be more competitive, efficient and effective.

Placing business at the centre

Direct business consultation and engagement is key to the success of the Simplified Trade System. To date, the Taskforce has met with a range of businesses across the trade environment, from different parts of Australia and of different sizes. We are hearing from businesses that they need clearer information from government, more digital processes, and better connections between different parts of government.

The Taskforce held roundtables and a town hall towards the end of 2021. These events attracted representatives from a variety of industries and provided attendees a sounding board to share their thoughts on the current trade environment.

To further support the Taskforce with business engagement, the Government established the Simplified Trade System

Industry Advisory Council, comprising of senior business leaders from across the trade sector.

The Council is chaired by Australian businessman and philanthropist Paul Little and is providing practical insights, experience and an industry perspective to Government and the Taskforce. The Industry Advisory Council has strengthened our engagement with businesses through seeking views on what is working well and what improvements could be made to Australia's cross-border trade system.

A commitment to a simpler trade system

The Taskforce is building on the considerable work that has already been undertaken by business and Australian government agencies.

We are building on this to deliver a cross-border trade system that is less costly and complex, and effectively manages risks at the border. We know that outdated and inefficient regulations and processes increase the cost of trading for businesses and affect Australia's international competitiveness. We will work to improve services for business quickly and continually improve towards a future trade system that simplifies the business of trade.

There is still plenty of opportunity for business and industry members to provide further feedback at future events. To find out how to get involved, visit the Simplified Trade System website at: www.simplifiedtrade.gov.au ▲