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Communique

CAG Meeting 27 March 2024

The CAG convened for its first meeting of the year at Australian Border Force (ABF) Headquarters in Canberra, ACT. Acting Chair Mr Paul Barfoot, A/g Commander Trusted Trader and Trade Compliance Branch, conducted opening formalities and meeting administration, with the revised Terms of Reference receiving members' endorsement.

Members' contributions to Customs Brokers Licensing workshops held in November 2023 and February 2024 were acknowledged, providing valuable operational and business views which assisted in the drafting of the proposed revisions to Customs Licensing conditions. Further discussion occurred, enabling members to provide additional feedback, including seeking clarity of some proposed definitions. The revised conditions will come into effect by 1 July 2024.

Discussions moved to the Australian Trusted Trader 2.0 (ATT 2.0) program, which is Australia's Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) model supporting supply chain security. Advice was provided that work is being undertaken to identify co-design opportunities and options for information sharing across government and industry. This is expected to assist with driving evolution of the program to meet the security and trade facilitation challenges of the future. Green Customs initiatives were also discussed, with advice provided regarding ABF plans to support industry green trade practices in alignment with the WCO's Green Customs agenda.

The changing patterns of importing large manufactured products requiring split consignments to enable transit was considered. Members noted that potential expansion of Schedule 4, item 45 of the Customs Tariff Act 1995 to include Chapters 94, 95 and 97 may be required to facilitate trade. Government representatives acknowledged the issue and agreed to consult with the Department of Industry Science and Resources (DISR).

Member feedback was sought on the current format of the Goods Compliance Update (GCU). Members noted the value of the publication to industry, with it being used to support training and development. Further value-add could be obtained through inclusion of infringement notices statistics, trade and policy updates, compliance data and information on common Integrated Cargo System (ICS) reporting errors.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) led discussion regarding ABS Confidentiality Procedures for trade flow data, and accessibility of statistics held in the Australian Harmonized Export Commodity Classification (AHECC). Acknowledging its importance to industry, these matters will be examined with a view to improving presentation and accessibility.

Members then discussed World Trade Organization (WTO) dispute decision DS603, and noting a number of commodities were identified, sought further advice regarding implications and compliance issues for Australia's trade remedies system. DFAT agreed to update members with a further update at the next meeting.

In closing, the Chair thanked members for their engagement.

The next CAG is scheduled for 17 September 2024.

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