

OFFICIAL

Communique

CAPEC Meeting 20 August 2024

The Australian Border Force (ABF) convened the second CAPEC meeting of the year at the ABF Headquarters in Canberra ACT, with Co-chairs Mr Tony Smith, Assistant Commissioner, Customs Compliance, Targeting and Enforcement, and Ms Tharanie Vithanage, First Assistant Secretary, Strategy and Policy, conducting opening formalities and meeting administration.

Members noted recent ABF changes to its organisational structure, which have been implemented to support greater efficiencies and centralisation of operational functions, as recommended in the Australian Public Service Commission capability review of the Department of Home Affairs and the ABF. This includes the transfer of functions, formerly managed under the now dissolved Operation Jardena, into ABF regional operations. Members acknowledged ABF advice that strengthening supply chain integrity remains a priority and will be coordinated centrally to ensure national consistency in relation to operational and enforcement activities. However, it was noted that improvements to communication with industry are required, particularly in relation to Australian Customs Notices (ACN) and requests for information.

Members then discussed proposed amendments to both the Customs Amendment Strengthening and Modernising Licensing Other Measures Bill 2024, and the Customs Licensing Charges Amendment Bill 2024, which are currently before Parliament. Following industry feedback, Broker Licensing Conditions have been amended and simplified, noting there remains concerns with the Fit and Proper Persons (FPP) framework. ACN 2024/21 has been provided to licence holders for their information. Notifications for licence renewals, complexities in relation to B555 and processes for the transfer and storage of personal information were also discussed, with additional advice to be provided regarding member sites negatively impacted by B555 requirements.

Members were briefed by the Illicit Tobacco and E-cigarette Commissioner (ITEC), and discussed the impacts of high volumes of illicit goods detections, work underway to uplift detection capabilities, and the role of the ITEC in identifying gaps in legislation, policy, compliance and enforcement processes. Discussion included advice that import requirements for vaping goods have not changed, and are detailed in 2023/51.

Members were updated in relation to the Border Watch program, which is being relocated within the Department of Home Affairs. A new Border Watch operating model is under development, and industry will be provided with further information as it becomes available.

Members considered a briefing in relation to a break-bulk reporting submission currently under review as part of the ABF Regulatory Sandbox process, with a response to be provided in due course.

The next CAPEC meeting will be held in February 2025.

OFFICIAL