



Australian
BORDER FORCE

National Committee on Trade Facilitation

The National Committee on Trade Facilitation

Communiqué

30 July 2025

The National Committee on Trade Facilitation (NCTF) held an Extraordinary Meeting at the Australian Border Force (ABF) Head Quarters in Brindabella Park, ACT. The meeting was convened by Ms Tharanie Vithanage, First Assistant Secretary Strategy and Policy Division, and Mr Lachlan Smith, Deputy Director, Trade and International Affairs, Australian Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

Reflecting the NCTF's important role as the Australian Government's key trade facilitation forum with industry, members welcomed the opportunity to consider trade-related initiatives ahead of the Government's upcoming Economic Reform Roundtable (Roundtable), to be held from 19 to 21 August 2025.

Members acknowledged the Roundtable's focus on improving productivity, enhancing economic resilience, and fiscal sustainability complements the need for a border that is intelligent, adaptive and technology-enabled – not just modern, but truly future-ready.

Trade and Border Reform Initiatives

The Committee considered a suite of initiatives developed in consultation with NCTF members under the theme of *Boosting Trade* for submission by the Department of Home Affairs and ABF. These initiatives received strong support across industry members as critical enablers of Australia's economic growth and global competitiveness.

The proposed reforms include:

Removing low-revenue nuisance tariffs to reduce costs to business

Industry Members strongly supported removing tariffs that generate negligible revenue for the Australian community but impose disproportionate costs and regulatory burden on Australian importers. Industry Members noted removing these tariffs would immediately streamline border processing, reduce compliance complexity, and lower input costs for Australian businesses.

Boosting trusted trade – Australian Trusted Trader targeted growth

Members welcomed the proposed targeted expansion of the Australian Trusted Trader (ATT) program as a transformative reform that would reduce the regulatory burden and associated costs for a larger number of low-risk Australian businesses. By focusing on the volume and value of trade generated by ATTs, the program would have a much greater trade facilitation impact and elevate Australia's standing as a reliable and competitive global trading partner.



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Members noted the importance of the diversity reflected in the ATT program. Importers, exporters and service providers and large, medium and small enterprises will continue to contribute to improved regulation and economic outcomes through participation in the program.

Detect and disrupt illegitimate trade by managing risks earlier

Members endorsed efforts to strengthen ABF's ability to identify and manage risks earlier in the supply chains, noting that such initiatives should not impose burden on the trading community.

Members emphasised that early risk intervention and partnerships between industry and government are vital to maintain trust in the border with just-in-time supply chains, however should not form an additional compliance burden or limit Australia's ability to be a trading nation.

Pathways for Modernising the Integrated Cargo System (ICS)

Members emphasised the ICS's foundational role in Australia's trade and biosecurity frameworks and strongly supported reform pathways to build a modern, flexible and digital system that aligns with contemporary trade practices and current and future industry needs. Members noted air and sea cargo volumes are expected to increase by over 70 per cent between 2023 and 2033. Australia's trade model will continue to evolve and our system needs to be able to adapt. Members stressed that a failure to transition the ICS to an adaptable and highly available cargo system may undermine Australia's ability and reputation to compete in fast-evolving global markets and pose a fundamental risk, which would cause severe productivity losses, and disrupt supply chains nationwide.

Improve speed and trade at seaports and airports

Members noted the value of enhancing cargo screening efficiency at critical gateways as essential to helping remove a key bottleneck that increases costs and delays commerce. Enhanced targeting and streamlined processes would boost operational efficiency and reduce costs, while improving the robust protections to prevent harm to the Australian community.

Members noted that initiatives would be further discussed at a Home Affairs Roundtable on 14 August. This would be attended by ABF Commissioner and Home Affairs Secretary, along with invited industry members. The Home Affairs Roundtable dedicated to trade initiatives will be chaired by the ABF Commissioner along with invited industry members.



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Members reaffirmed the value of a collaborative, industry-driven approach to unlock significant productivity gains by ensuring trade at the border is open, smarter, connected and more responsive. It was acknowledged that while some of the proposed reforms involve short-term costs, there was strong consensus that investment is essential to securing significant long-term benefits – ensuring Australian businesses remain competitive and resilient, barriers to trade are reduced, and Australia's border remains secure and efficient.



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NCTF meeting attendees

Australasian Railway Association	Australian Border Force
Australia Post	Attorney General's Department
Australian Chamber of Commerce & Industry	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Australian Industry Group	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Business Council of Australia	Simplified Trade System Unit
Conference of Asia Pacific Express Carriers	
Export Council of Australia	
Food and Beverage Importers Association	
Freight & Trade Alliance/ Australian Peak Shippers Association	
International Forwarders and Customs Brokers Association of Australia	
International Network of Customs Universities	
Law Council of Australia	
Shipping Australia Limited	
World Customs Organization Asia Pacific Regional Private Sector Group	