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Australian
BORDER FORCE



National Committee on Trade Facilitation

Terms of Reference

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1. Purpose

The National Committee on Trade Facilitation (NCTF) provides a forum for government and industry stakeholders to share information and discuss strategic issues that relate to international trade facilitation. The NCTF was initially established to provide a forum to facilitate both domestic coordination and implementation of the provisions of the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Trade Facilitation (WTO TFA). As Australia has fully implemented the Agreement, the NCTF continues to play a monitoring role and discussing new opportunities to improve and reform Australia's trade system.

1.1. Functions of the Committee

The NCTF provides a forum for government and industry stakeholders to discuss strategic issues relating to trade facilitation affecting Australian industry stakeholders in the international trade environment, including but not limited to, emerging areas of risk and benefits and international best practice and standards. The NCTF will discuss opportunities for innovation, reform and improvements to Australia's domestic trade facilitation environment and engagement with the international trade environment.

For the purposes of the NCTF, trade facilitation refers to measures designed to expedite the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit. The NCTF and its working groups will act as a consultative forum between government and industry on trade facilitation matters including the delivery of efficiencies and deregulation at the border through policy, regulatory or technology changes.

1.2. Responsibilities

The NCTF is responsible for consulting with the Australian Government on trade facilitation and supporting the broader trade agenda including:

- facilitating and monitoring Australia's implementation of the WTO TFA;
- emerging strategic issues in the international trade facilitation;
- the tasking of issue specific working groups as required;
- opportunities to improve the international trade facilitation, including exploring opportunities to realise efficiencies and improve regulation at the border;
- implementing established United Nations, World Customs Organization, WTO and any other relevant multilateral and regional fora tools and guidelines;
- improvements to the global trade system that result from digital issues affecting trade facilitation; and
- any associated recommendations for policy, regulation or legislative change.

2. Governance

2.1. Governing principles

The NCTF will adhere to the following governing principles:

- **Strategy** - the NCTF will be focussed on strategic issues and exploring opportunities to realise mutual benefits for the Government and industry in the international trade environment.
- **Proactivity** - the NCTF will be proactive in identifying and discussing emerging strategic issues and risks in the international trade environment that may impact Australia's facilitation of international trade. The NCTF will seek out opportunities and initiatives and will explore solutions to strategic issues in the international trade environment.
- **Collaboration** - members will be constructive, creative and strategic in their discussions, carefully weighing the impact of any proposals on all stakeholders.

- **Accountability** - the NCTF will be accountable for its recommendations. All recommendations must be objective, transparent and open to external scrutiny. Outcomes of discussion will be reported to the ABF Commissioner and industry stakeholders
- **A Group Focus** - the NCTF is a group forum and not an avenue to pursue individual agendas.
- **Engaging/Communicative** - the NCTF will ensure relevant information is available to members and the general public.

2.2. Chairing arrangements

ABF First Assistant Secretary Strategy and Policy will Chair the NCTF.

An industry representative will be appointed as a Co-Chair. The industry co-chair position will be for a period of 12 months, as per the financial year.

Members, through a nomination process which will be supported by the Secretariat, will vote on the industry co-chair position.

The Secretariat will send all members an industry co-chair nomination form. Members will be given 10 business days to submit an industry co-chair nomination form. Following the nomination process, the Secretariat will advise all members of the outcome of the process.

2.3. Membership

The NCTF will be comprised of representatives of government agencies and industry stakeholders. Current members are listed at [Attachment A](#).

Industry organisations and/or peak bodies may be invited to submit an expression of interest for membership to the NCTF. NCTF membership is at the discretion of the Chair and Co-chair.

NCTF membership will be reviewed every two years or at the discretion of the Chair as required.

2.4. Working groups

The Chair of the NCTF may establish temporary working groups as appropriate, to provide input on specific priority issues. These groups will provide a means for government and industry to work together on policy development, program design, technology changes and operational implementation and strategies to address complex issues.

The working groups will report outcomes of discussion to the NCTF including significant risks or issues for further consideration. Current working groups are listed at [Attachment B](#).

2.5. Reporting groups

The Chair may invite consultative groups working on matters relevant to trade facilitation to report to the NCTF as appropriate.

3. Logistics

3.1. Frequency of meetings

The NCTF will meet a minimum of two (2) times per annum (per calendar year). Additional meetings will be arranged where necessary.

Other tasks will be progressed out-of-session as agreed.

3.2. Attendance

Each member of the NCTF may nominate one representative, or delegate to attend meetings. A proxy can attend on behalf of a member following approval by the Secretariat. An observer may be granted access, on request to the Secretariat, in cases where members require additional expertise on a particular subject matter. Non-member industry stakeholders may be granted observer status at meetings on request to the Secretariat.

All costs associated with attending NCTF meetings and any associated working groups will be borne by members.

3.3. Secretariat

Secretariat support will be provided by the ABF and will include preparing agendas, circulating papers, drafting meeting minutes and communiques, organising meeting arrangements, following up on action items from each meeting and maintaining a forward work plan for NCTF discussions.

The Secretariat can be contacted at: industry.engagement@abf.gov.au

3.4. Meeting Agendas

Members will be invited to nominate agenda items and papers ahead of each meeting.

The Secretariat will circulate the meeting agenda, agenda papers and any member updates to NCTF members at least 10 days in advance of the meeting.

4. Document control

All amendments and variations to the terms of reference that are substantial changes to the content or intent are included in the document control table below. All substantial changes will be circulated to all members for comments and endorsement prior to approval by the chair at the next meeting.

Document control:

Version Number	Date of issue	Brief description of change	Endorsement	Approver
V0.5	March 2025	Addition of framework regarding Industry co-chairing	A/g CMDR Linard	FAS Vithanage
V0.4	February 2025	Law Council of Australia and Chair of the WCO AP Regional Private Sector Group added to membership	Cmdr Evans	FAS Vithanage
V0.3	September 2022	Department of Finance added to membership	AS Bell	FAS Skene
V0.3	September 2022	Revised ToR	SD, Ellenberg	SD, Ellenberg
V0.2	June 2020			
V0.1	2015			

NCTF Membership as at March 2025

Government members

- Austrade
- Australian Border Force
- Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Department of Finance
- Department of Industry, Science, and Resources
- Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications and the Arts
- Simplified Trade System Taskforce

Industry

- American Chamber of Commerce in Australia (AmCham)
- Australia Post
- Australian Airports Association
- Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI)
- Australian Industry Group (Ai Group)
- Australian Peak Shippers Association (APSA)
- Australasian Railway Association
- Board of Airline Representatives of Australia (BARA)
- Business Council of Australia (BCA)
- Conference of Asia Pacific Express Carriers (CAPEC)
- Customs and Trade Advisory Group (CTAG)
- Export Council of Australia (ECA)
- Food and Beverage Importers Association (FBIA)
- Freight and Trade Alliance (FTA) Pty Ltd
- Heavy Vehicle Industry Australia (HVIA)
- International Forwarders and Customs Brokers Association of Australia (IFCBAA)
- International Network of Customs Universities (INCU)
- Law Council of Australia
- Maritime Industry Australia Limited
- National Farmers Federation (NFF)
- Ports Australia
- Shipping Australia Ltd.
- WCO AP Regional Private Sector Group

NCTF Working Groups as at March 2025

- Trade and Goods Compliance Advisory Group (CAG)
- Trade Facilitation Initiatives Working Group (TFIWG)
- Trade Technology Working Group (TTWG)