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Communique

TFIWG Meeting 10 April 2024

The ABF convened the first TFIWG meeting of the year at the Department of Home Affairs in Belconnen ACT with Mr Ashley Bell, Assistant Secretary Customs and Border Modernisation Branch chairing the meeting.

The meeting first heard about the Simplified Trade System (STS) reforms and the STS Taskforce funding outcomes from the 2023-24 Mid-Year Economic Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO). From 1 July 2024, the STS Implementation Taskforce will transition to become the STS Unit within Austrade.

The meeting acknowledged the previously released STS consultation paper (PDF), an outline was given of the STS initiatives, including the STS Regulatory Reform Roadmap, the Streamlining the Cargo Intervention Model (SCIM) initiative, the proposed Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records (MLETR), and legislation to strengthen customs licensing requirements. Members were advised that a Trade Single Window (TSW) proposal is currently before Government for consideration (as at April 2024).

Further discussion was led by the Attorney-General's Department (AGD) in relation to MLETR, with advice that options are being prepared for government consideration of implementing it into domestic law.

The meeting was provided a summary of work to develop whole-of-government policy frameworks to support the STS agenda. These include:

A Trade Identity Policy Framework – the proposed draft principles of the framework are convenient; secure; inclusive; voluntary; optimised; proportionate; connected; and interoperable.

A Border Controls Policy Framework – the proposed draft principles of the framework are engaged; scalable; defined; enforceable; modern; appropriate to risk; economically feasible and compliant with international rules and conventions.

Fit and Proper Person (FPP) Assessment Reform – Australian Government agencies have agreed to standardise draft principles of FPP assessments to reduce duplication and streamline processes. Legislation changes will be required across STS partner agencies to implement the reforms, noting that further industry consultation will be undertaken as the reforms develop.

The ABF updated on the Regulatory Sandbox, which went live on 14 March 2024 and remains open for submission of proposals.

The ABF briefed members on the development of a Border Intermediaries Sub-Working Group, with the Terms of Reference for the group being endorsed. DAFF is currently looking at how to increase integration of third parties into functional biosecurity activities, and this highlighted the importance of DAFF involvement in the discussion around intermediaries.

The next TFIWG meeting will be held on 21 August 2024.

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