

Negotiations on the UK's future trading relationship with Australia: Update

News story

Trade negotiators from the UK and Australia held the first round of negotiations for a UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between 29 June and 10 July 2020.



We are now one step closer to an ambitious, wide-ranging free trade agreement with one of our oldest friends. An FTA with Australia can bring investment, better jobs, higher wages and lower prices just when we need them the most.

Both teams of negotiators recognised the unprecedented circumstances we find ourselves in and reiterated that more global trade is essential to support post-Covid economic recovery.

Negotiations were conducted virtually and covered discussions on all areas of a comprehensive trade agreement. The discussions covered the following areas:

- Anti-Corruption and Transparency
- Competition
- Cross-cutting general provisions
- Customs
- Digital/e-commerce
- Environment
- Financial Services
- Trade in Goods and Trade Remedies
- Good Regulatory Practice
- Intellectual Property
- Investment
- Labour
- Procurement
- Rules of Origin
- Services, including Movement of Natural Persons and Professional

Business Services

- Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
- State Owned Enterprises
- Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
- State to State Dispute Settlement
- Technical Barriers to Trade
- Telecommunications

We also had positive exploratory discussions on Clean Growth, Development, Women's Economic Empowerment, and Innovation.

Discussions between negotiators were productive and reflected our shared ambition to secure a comprehensive deal to boost trade and investment between our like-minded economies.

Teams discussed their respective objectives and agreed a forward plan for future talks. Our positive discussions in round one have laid the groundwork for the UK and Australia to achieve high-quality outcomes across the agreement.

The UK and Australia are aligned in many areas which will enable us to make quick progress across many chapters. In discussions, both countries emphasised a desire to be particularly ambitious in areas including services, digital trade and in supporting Small and Medium-sized Enterprises to benefit from the opportunities that increased trade provide.

The Government is committed to negotiating a comprehensive agreement with Australia and we look forward to making further progress. We will explore the option of face-to-face negotiations when it is safe to do so. The Government will make its next statement on progress following the second round of talks, currently planned for September.

Published 14 July 2020