

## Country: Australia

### Background:

**Type of body:** National Committee on Trade Facilitation (NCTF)

**Official name:** National Committee on Trade Facilitation (NCTF)

**Motivation for its establishment:** To satisfy the requirements of Article 23.2 of the WTO TFA

**Year of establishment:** 2015

**Other national bodies dealing with WTO issues and/or with Trade Facilitation:** No

**Former multi-agency group/committee:** No

**Current status of the working group (running, pilot phase, not functioning, etc):** Running

### Institutional Framework:

**Degree of institutionalisation:** The establishment of the NCTF was approved by the Secretary of the Department of Immigration and Border Protection and Terms of Reference were drafted in consultation with members.

**Type of organisation (ad hoc group, legal entity/organisation, etc):** Ad hoc

**Scope/mandate:** The NCTF is responsible for facilitating and monitoring Australia's implementation of the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Trade Facilitation and to review and provide advice to the Australian Government on trade facilitation including:

Emerging strategic issues in the international trade operating environment

The tasking of issue-specific working groups as required

Opportunities to improve the international trade environment, including exploring opportunities to realise efficiencies and deregulation at the border

Implementing established UN and WCO tools and guidelines

Coordinating support to developing trade partners

Roll back of existing protectionist measures especially non-tariff barriers

Improvements to the global trade system for the emerging digital economy

Any associated recommendations for policy, regulation or legislative change.

**Terms of reference:** Yes

**Coordinating agency:** The Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP)

**Working structure of the group:** Currently comprised of:

Chair - Deputy Secretary, Policy Group, DIBP

Three Working Groups work under the NCTF:

Legislative Working Group

Regulatory Reform Working Group

Single Window Working Group

**Permanent technical secretariat:** Yes

## **Funding:**

**Budget:** No

**Sources of funding:** Government

## **Objectives / Focus:**

**Objectives:** To explore opportunities to improve trade facilitation including the delivery of efficiencies and deregulation at the border and any associated recommendations for policy, regulation or legislative change

**Working plan:** Yes

**Monitoring and evaluation:** Action items are monitored at every meeting

**Reporting form and supervisory authority:** The NCTF reports to the Secretary of DIBP and the Comptroller-General of Customs as appropriate.

## **Membership / Composition:**

### **Public or quasi-public agencies:**

Department of Immigration and Border Protection

Austrade

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Department of Industry, Innovation and Science

Department of Agriculture and Water Resources

Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development

### **Private associations or entities:**

American Chamber of Commerce in Australia

Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI)

Australian Federation of International Forwarders (AFIF) Ltd

Australian Industry Group (AIG)

Board of Airline Representatives of Australia (BARA)

Conference of Asia Pacific Express Carriers (CAPEC)

Customs Brokers and Forwarders Council of Australia (CBFCA)

Customs and Trade Advisory Group (CTAG)

Export Council of Australia (ECA)

Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI)

Food and Beverage Importer Association (FBIA)

Freight and Trade Alliance (FTA) Pty Ltd  
International Network of Customs Universities (INCU)  
Shipping Australia Limited

**Level of seniority of participants:** Public agencies - First Assistant Secretary/Assistant Secretary/General Manager/Director

Industry members - CEO/President/Principal/Director

## **Participation:**

**Frequency of meetings:** Yes, biannually

**Level of participation:** Approximately 70 to 80 per cent of members attend meetings

**Meetings format:** No

## **Promotion / Communication:**

**Communication channels to keep stakeholders informed of TF meetings:** Via email and via the Committee website available to members only

**Interface with other working groups/committees on similar issues:** Through:

Cross membership of the NCTF and its working groups and other relevant committees

The Chairs of working groups and other relevant committees providing updates of their operations at NCTF meetings

Dissemination of meeting minutes, papers and other relevant communications to the membership

**Undertake information sessions to stakeholders or general public:** No

## **Benefits:**

**Impact:** The NCTF has made tangible recommendations to the Government on issues such as business-government conferences and engagement; free trade agreements; and new reform initiatives, such as including the development of Australia's recently established Authorised Economic Operator Programme – The Australian Trusted Trader Programme. The NCTF has increased engagement and transparency on upcoming and newly implemented trade facilitation measures by Government.

**Benefits for the country's responsiveness to the WTO negotiation process:** N/A - the WTO TFA negotiations concluded prior to the establishment of the NCTF

**Concrete operational outcomes:** The NCTF is not a decision-making body. The NCTF proposes recommendations to DIBP and other Australian government agencies for consideration and decision.

## **Lessons learned:**

## **Success factors:**

- Establishing clear Terms of Reference
- Regular communications with NCTF members
- Clear responsibilities of participants
- Commitment from members to participate

## **Greatest obstacles:**

- Maintaining engagement during intersessional periods
- Availability of all stakeholders at all NCTF meetings to obtain the appropriate gamut of views
- Ensuring engagement on long-term strategic issues rather than tactical and minor regulatory issues

**Lessons learned from your experience:** Trade facilitation contributes to economic prosperity and business-government partnerships.

## **Future plans:**

### **Plans for further development:**

- To increase the involvement of Industry members in the management of the NCTF
- Review of membership

## **Contact information:**

**Contact Information:** The NCTF Secretariat is contactable via the Secretariat mailbox at:

[tradeagreements@border.gov.au](mailto:tradeagreements@border.gov.au)