

**SENATOR THE HON SIMON BIRMINGHAM**

Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment

Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate

Senator for South Australia

**THE HON ANDREW GEE MP**

Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education

Minister Assisting the Minister for Trade and Investment

Federal Member for Calare

## MEDIA RELEASE

17 June 2020

**Enhanced transparency for free trade agreement negotiations**

The Morrison Government has today announced it will establish a Ministerial Advisory Committee (MAC) to help inform the Government’s ongoing free trade agreement ( FTA) agenda.

Federal Trade Minister Simon Birmingham said the MAC would form an important part of the Morrison Government’s commitment to enhancing transparency around FTA negotiations.

“This forum brings together a broad cross-section of business, industry and community representatives with trade expertise to help inform Australia’s negotiations and policies going forward,” Minister Birmingham said.

"Our commitment to free trade and open markets continues to play a major role in our strong position that has seen Australia record 28 consecutive monthly trade surplus in a row.

“With our free trade agreement negotiations with the UK starting today, and our ongoing negotiations with the EU, this forum will provide an important opportunity to hear the views of experts from industry and groups.

“The MAC will also build on existing consultative processes for our FTA’s which includes ongoing stakeholder engagement programs, complementing the important work of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties.”

Minister for Decentralisation and Regional Education, and Minister Assisting the Minister for Trade and Investment, Andew Gee said the establishment of the MAC would help inform the Government’s work to deliver free trade agreements for Australian farmers and businesses.

“The Government has a strong record of delivering high-quality FTAs that drive export opportunities, economic prosperity and job creation, especially in country Australia. This is a record we are proud of and want to continue to see grow,” Minister Gee said.

“In these challenging times, it is critical that Australian exporters, especially those impacted by the recent drought and bushfires, take full advantage of the opportunities available under these FTAs. At the same time, we must draw upon our business community and their diverse perspectives.

“The MAC will provide a mechanism that enables us to build upon and strengthen our engagement with a range of businesses and community leaders, stretching from the cities to our country towns, to ensure that all Australians no matter where they live benefit from our growing FTA agenda,” Minister Gee said.

Minister Birmingham and Ms Christine Holgate will co-chair the Committee. The first meeting will be held next month and it’s expected the Committee will convene at least twice a year.

**Media Contacts**

Benn Ayre: +61 428 342 325

Julia Ebbs: +61 417 097 644

Gabrielle Phipps: +61 400 917 405

*Authorised by Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham, South Australia.*

## Ministerial Advisory Council (MAC) Members

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Title, Organisation** |
| Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham | Federal Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment  |
| The Hon Andrew Gee MP | Minister Assisting the Minister for Trade and Investment  |
| Mr Tony Battaglene | Chief Executive, Australian Grape and Wine |
| Ms Laura Berry | Chief Executive Officer, Supply Nation |
| Mr James Bond | President, Australian Services Roundtable |
| Mr Gerard Brody | Chair, Consumers’ Federation of Australia |
| Ms Kate Carnell, AO | Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman |
| Ms Tania Constable, PSM | Chief Executive Officer, Minerals Council of Australia |
| Prof. Andrew Conway, FIPA FFA | Chief Executive Officer, Institute of Public Accountants |
| Ms Bridget Fair, GAICD | Chief Executive Officer, Free TV Australia |
| Mr Scott Farrell | Partner, King & Wood Mallesons |
| Mr Kevin Gallagher | Chair, Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association |
| Ms Christine Holgate | Group CEO and Managing Director, Australia Post |
| Ms Veronica Papacosta | Acting Chief Executive Officer, Seafood Industry Australia |
| Mrs Fiona Simson | President, National Farmers Federation |
| Mr Andrew Stoler | International Trade Consultant |
| Mr Jason Strong | Managing Director, Meat and Livestock Australia |
| Ms Jacqui Walshe BBS, MBA, GAICD | Deputy Chair, Australian Tourism Export Council  |
| Mr Dan Walton | National Secretary, The Australian Workers’ Union |
| Prof. Paul Wellings, CBE | Vice Chancellor, University of Wollongong |