

UK & Australia commit to rapid and ambitious free trade agreement

International Trade Secretary Liz Truss is in Canberra, Australia, today where she will meet with senior politicians including Trade Minister Simon Birmingham.

Speaking ahead of the visit in Canberra today, the International Trade Secretary Liz Truss said:

It's great to be in Australia this week as you are one of our highest priorities for a post-Brexit trade deal. And with good reason – trade between our two countries was worth £16.6 billion in the year to March 2019, and we have more than £46 billion invested in each others economies.

Now, for the first time in nearly half a century, we are taking back control of our trade policy. I want to see an ambitious trade deal which reduces tariff and non-tariff barriers for UK exporters.

But we cannot afford to wait. Britain is going to be ready to trade after Brexit. That's why I'm so pleased that today we are reaffirming our commitment to launch bilateral free trade agreement negotiations as soon as possible.

It's good to see that Australia is going to quick off the mark and it'll be mirrored by the UK under our new government – a government that takes action.

A UK-Australia trade deal won't just be a good thing – it'll be a great thing, for our businesses, for our consumers, for our workers and for our two great countries.

The UK is one of Australia's largest trading partners and our trading relationship was worth £16.6 billion in the twelve months to March 2019.

Around 15,000 UK businesses export their goods to Australia.

The Department for International Trade has helped many of these businesses to secure contracts to export their goods and services to Australia, which has resulted in:

- Commuters in Sydney soon to arrive at the central metro station upgraded by the British construction company Laing O'Rourke and British architects John McAslan + Partners
- British online supermarket pioneers Ocado partnering with retail giant Coles to bring their world leading technology to Australia, transforming online shopping and delivery for customers
- East Midlands-based Bradbury & Son selling their cheese in Australian supermarkets Coles and Woolworths
- Consumers in Australia saving money through the UK's neo-bank Revolut services by avoiding hidden fees and hefty exchange rate markups
- Motorists in Australia now having smoother journeys thanks to British firm CitiLogik, whose world-leading technology is revolutionising traffic analysis in Australia cities.

Despite already strong trade links, there are still trade barriers holding British businesses back.

Some UK exporters face tariff barriers into Australian markets, including up to 5% in the automotive and machinery sectors.

An FTA could create more opportunities for:

- British whisky producers who could benefit from lower tariffs
- UK expertise to support Australia's thriving infrastructure sector, making it easier for British architects and engineers to work in Australia
- British car makers, such as Jaguar Land Rover, who could benefit from lower tariffs and improved access for their new environmental technologies
- Further enhance our already thriving two-way investment, the UK being the 2nd biggest investor in Australia
- Building on the successful UK-Australia FinTech Bridge, increasing the opportunities for cooperation between the UK and Australian financial services sectors
- The millions of small and medium sized businesses across the UK to trade more, by reducing regulatory barriers and supporting increased participation in trade.

David Smith, Diageo Australia Managing Director:

Our business in this market is truly one of great partnership and collaboration between the UK and Australia, built on iconic founder brands like Johnnie Walker, Tanqueray, Gordon's and Cardhu.

Going back to 1887, Australia was the first international market for Johnnie Walker. But there remain barriers of up to 5% on some spirits and we very much look forward to a UK-Australia free trade agreement.

The UK government's negotiating strategy will be based on one of the largest public consultations in British history. This involved more than 146,000 people and organisations sharing their views about a future UK-Australia free trade agreement.