

Negotiations on the UK's Future Trading Relationship with the Australia: Update

During the two weeks, negotiators held 51 negotiation sessions, covering 27 different chapter areas. In total, we have had 170 sessions since launching negotiations in July 2020.

Both the negotiation teams shared text and additional proposals before the round, including on Digital, Labour and Technical Barriers to Trade, allowing negotiators to enhance their substantive conversations. From this, negotiators were able to build mutual understanding, and make further progress consolidating texts in most chapter areas. Focused engagement has enabled negotiators to provisionally identify shared ambition and remaining points of divergence to work through ahead of the next round.

Good progress has been made in areas including Customs, Rules of Origin, and Professional Services. The majority of text has been agreed in chapters on Good Regulatory Practice, as well as Small to Medium-Sized Enterprises. Development in the latter reflects the commitment of both Australia and the UK to ensuring businesses of all sizes can benefit from the FTA.

Some text was agreed in cross-border trade in services. Negotiators were also able to hold technical discussions on mobility, international maritime transport services, express delivery services and domestic regulation. Meanwhile, progress was also made on Procurement and Digital, with parts of the text agreed. In addition, there were productive discussions on the Innovation chapter.

Discussions were taken forward on Investment, where we hope to include provisions which further enhance our strong bilateral relationship, building on the UK's position as second largest direct investor in Australia and the second largest recipient of Australian Foreign Direct Investment in 2019.

The Australia and UK negotiation teams have also planned an intensive period of intersessional discussions in the coming weeks to continue this momentum ahead of a fifth round of talks.

Below is a summary list of the areas discussed in the round, which continued to take place by video conference:

- Anti-Corruption
- Competition
- Customs and Trade Facilitation
- Development
- Digital/ e-commerce
- Environment & Clean Growth
- Financial Services

- Good Regulatory Practice
- Innovation
- Intellectual Property
- Investment
- Labour
- Legal and Institutional provisions
- Government Procurement
- Rules of Origin
- Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
- Services, including movement of natural persons, professional services, international maritime transport services and delivery services.
- Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
- State-to-State Dispute Settlement
- Technical Barriers to Trade
- Telecommunications
- Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment
- Trade in Goods
- Transparency

Any deal the UK Government agrees will be fair and balanced and in the best interests of the whole of the UK. As we will in all negotiations, we remain committed to upholding our high environmental, labour, product and food safety, and animal welfare standards in our trade agreement with Australia, as well as protecting the National Health Service (NHS).

[Strolling into Australia: Manchester baby business secures major export contract](#)

- Cosatto, a bespoke baby product manufacturer, exports to Australia for first time in over a decade as a trade deal nears
- Government support helped them secure a £130,000 order for over 1,000 prams, strollers and highchairs
- The Manchester-based business now expects to turn over £14 million this year, with more exports across the world made easier thanks to Free Trade Agreements

A family-owned Manchester business has secured its first export to Australia in 15 years, shipping £130,000 of its bespoke baby products with the financial support of UK Export Finance (UKEF).

The UK and Australia are important economic partners. A new free trade agreement between the two countries would be worth billions of pounds to the UK economy and is close to being signed.

[Cosatto](#) is an award-winning baby product manufacturer and works with the University of Sussex's Baby Lab to create colourful and engaging patterns that help young children to develop. It already sells to retailers large and small in the UK, and sales to distributors in countries like Japan account for 15% of its growing export business.

However, when it came to arranging the insurance for a major deal with a distributor in Melbourne, their insurance broker would not cover the risk if the deal fell through. At risk of losing the contract, Cosatto turned to UKEF, the UK's export credit agency, which was able to step in with its [export credit insurance scheme](#). This enabled the business to export 300 prams, 750 strollers and 200 highchairs to another family-owned business.

Despite COVID-19 adversely affecting some of Cosatto's largest retail customers, the ingenuity of the business in moving its operations online has allowed it to adapt to a new way of working. It now expects to turn over £14 million this year and is talking to the distributor about new product lines.

Graham Stuart MP, Minister for Exports, said:

This is a prime example of how innovative British brands have the potential to go global with the right support. Exporting companies like Cosatto are more productive, create more jobs and pay higher wages, which is why we are radically changing how exporters access the government finance they need to sell to the world, allowing them to take full advantage of upcoming trade deals with countries like Australia.

Andrew Kluge, Chief Executive Officer at Cosatto, said:

We're incredibly proud of our business and of the way we've adapted this past year. Australia is an important market for us, and so was ensuring we could meet demand when the first door opened in years. Our unique products are backed by science, and continue to save the world from boring baby stuff – one happy child at a time.

Steve Cowles, UKEF Export Finance Manager for North West England, said:

We are here to ensure businesses in the North of England have the funding and support they need to win contracts, fulfil orders and get paid. Cosatto is a strong family business that has managed to crack a competitive market, and this demonstrates the huge potential that lies in trading overseas.

About UK Export Finance

[UK Export Finance](#) is the UK's export credit agency. It exists to ensure that no viable UK export lacks for finance or insurance from the private market, providing finance and insurance to help exporters win, fulfil and get paid for export contracts.

[From scheme to screen: Married At First Sight, Midsomer Murders and independent film Mothering Sunday among titles coming to screens soon thanks to Restart Scheme](#)

- 230 projects have restarted production thanks to the Government's Film and TV Production Restart Scheme
- 50 productions that have benefitted are either on screen or close to airing named
- More than 25,000 screen sector jobs have been supported by the scheme since launch in October
- Scheme will help keep the cameras rolling for the rest of the year with six month extension of support until 31 December 2021

Titles of more than 50 productions that are currently airing or soon to reach screens thanks to the Film and TV Production Restart Scheme have been published today.

The Scheme has already registered 230 film and TV productions, providing confidence to the screen sectors and protecting more than 25,000 jobs across one of the country's leading creative industries.

The Chancellor announced a six month extension to the £500 million Film and TV Restart Scheme as part of this year's Budget.

Productions that begin filming before 31 October 2021 will now be able to submit compensation claims for Coronavirus-related losses including filming delays from illness amongst the cast and crew that occur up to 31 December 2021. Productions will have until March 2022 to submit claims for compensation.

The latest extension is projected to support another 20,000 jobs this year, taking the total number of jobs supported by the Scheme to over 60,000 as planned production schedules stabilise after disruption due to the pandemic.

Culture Secretary, Oliver Dowden, said:

Our Restart Scheme has already helped the UK's world class Film and TV sector bounce back strongly, with studio business booming, filling film studios and helping generate more than a billion pounds in production spend.

Now we're standing by it for another six months, supporting tens of thousands more jobs and many more box sets and box office hits.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, said:

Our world-leading film and TV industry supports hundreds of thousands of jobs and is a significant driver of economic activity. As part of our Plan for Jobs, we extended the Restart Scheme to continue giving productions the confidence they need to keep shooting, and it's great to see so many are benefitting from it.

Productions registered to the scheme include crime drama Unforgotten currently airing weekly on ITV; popular weekday favourites like Pointless and Ready Steady Cook; and Boxing Day the UK's first ever festive romantic comedy starring an all-black cast.

A list of productions currently available to watch or due to be released later this year is published below. The Scheme is also supporting projects in production that are yet to be publicly announced. Further detail on registered productions will be shared in due course.

Ben Roberts, chief executive of BFI, said:

The Government's Film & TV Production Restart Scheme has been instrumental in enabling our independent production industry to get back up and running. Cameras rolling on new productions generated a £1.19 billion uplift in spend in the final months of last year and a significant chunk of that has been generated by the 200-plus film and television productions which have been covered by the scheme against potential Covid-related disruption. Extending the scheme to the end of the year will ensure more productions can get made, unlocking millions of pounds of production spend and generating more jobs across the UK.

John McVay, chief executive of Pact, said:

The latest extension to the Production Restart Scheme is hugely appreciated by the UK audio visual economy which has been using the PRS to get back to pre-pandemic levels of production and employment. This is not only good news for the economy but is great

news for UK and global audiences who look to the UK as a global centre of excellence as recently highlighted on the Golden Globe wins.

The terms of the scheme will be kept under review as the sector recovers from the impact of the pandemic over the course of this year.

In addition to the significant scheme extension, the screen industry is to benefit from more support to independent cinemas through the Culture Recovery Fund, which will allocate a further £300 million to help culturally significant recover from the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Notes to Editors

The following production titles have registered to the Government's Film and TV Restart Scheme and are in the public domain.

Name of production	Production Company
Alex Rider series 2	Eleventh Hour Films
Angela Black	All3Media
Annika	Annika SPV Ltd
Apocalypse Wow	Tuesday's Child Television Ltd
Ballywater	Empire Street Productions
Baptiste series 2	All3Media
Beep	Happy Tramp North Ltd
Big Zuu's Big Eats series 2	Boom Cymru TV Ltd
Boxing Day	Boxing Day Productions / Raindog
Breeders	Avalon
Britain's Got Talent Christmas Special	Thames TV
Celebs Go Dating: The Mansion	All3Media/Lime Productions Ltd
Celebs Go Virtual Dating	Lime Productions Ltd
Cheaters	Clerkenwell Films
Cobra series 2	All3Media
Danny Boy	Expectation Entertainment
Essex Lorry Deaths	Expectation Entertainment
Expedition with Steve Backshall	True to Nature
Fell Good	Objective Media Group
Guessable series 2	Tuesday's Child Television Ltd
Guilt series 2	Guilt Ltd
HRT	Finestripe Productions Ltd
Inside Bond Street	Finestripe Productions Ltd
Jamie Johnson series 6	Short Form Film (JJ Productions) Ltd
Jazz 625: The British Jazz Explosion	Somethin' Else Sound Directions Ltd
Magpie Murders	Eleventh Hour Films
Manhunt	Buffalo Pictures

Name of production	Production Company
Married at First Sight	CPL Productions Ltd
Midsomer Murders	All3Media
Mother, Victim, Killer: The Story of Fri Martin	Expectation Entertainment Ltd
Mothering Sunday	No.9 Films
Murderous History	Warehouse 51 Productions Ltd
My Name Is Lizzie	Story Films/Objective Media Group
Nova Jones	Jam Media/TJNI
Pointless	Endemol Shine UK Ltd/Remarkable Television
Ready Steady Cook	Endemol Shine UK Ltd/Remarkable Television
Sarah Beeney's Renovate Don't Relocate series 2	Outline Productions
Say Yes to the Dress Lancashire	True North
State of the Union series 2	See-Saw Films
Still So Awkward	Channelx
The Fantastic Flitcrofts	BFI
The Forest	Expectation Entertainment Ltd
The Gallery	Paul Raschid Media
The Larkins	Objective Media Group
The Little People	Tempo Productions
The Road Dance	Road Dance
The Thief, His Wife and the Canoe	Objective Media Group
This Is My House	Expectation Entertainment
Unforgotten series 4	Blink Films
When William & Kate Married	Finestripe Productions Ltd
Who Do You Think You Are	Wall to Wall Media
Y Fflam	Vox Tan Ltd
You What	Screen Glue YW Ltd
Yr Amgueddfa	Boom Cymru TV Ltd

Prime Minister: "Our international ambitions must start at home"

- Landmark foreign policy and national security review will set out the PM's vision for a stronger, more secure, prosperous and resilient UK in 2030

- New strategy will drive investment in domestic industries like defence, technology and alternative energy
- More foreign and defence work will be done outside of London with the expansion of the FCDO's East Kilbride office, the National Cyber Force HQ in the North and the creation of regional trade hubs

The Integrated Review of security, defence, development and foreign policy, published tomorrow, will make the case for a UK international policy that rests on strong domestic foundations – in particular our security, resilience and a robust economy at home.

At the heart of our ability to be a strong international player is shoring up those foundations and the Integrated Review will make a case for more investment in national infrastructure, innovation and skills to ensure the UK can compete on a global level.

In November the Prime Minister announced the first conclusion of the Integrated Review: a £24bn programme of investment in defence. This will allow the government to invest in cutting-edge technology while creating 40,000 British jobs over the next four years.

Further commitments will be made to strengthening the UK's core industrial base in the Integrated Review, from building ships in Scotland and armoured vehicles in Wales, to lithium mining in Cornwall and manufacturing satellites in Northern Ireland.

These investments will create jobs for the future and maximise our advantage in science and technology while diversifying the UK's supply in goods critical for our defence and economy.

The Prime Minister said:

The foundation of our foreign policy is who we are as a country: our values, our strengths and – most importantly – our people. So I am determined to ensure we have a foreign policy that delivers for those people.

Our international ambitions must start at home, and through the Integrated Review we will drive investment back into our communities, ensuring the UK is on the cutting-edge of innovation and creating an entire country that is match-fit for a more competitive world.

The review also recognises the greatest source of strength – at home and abroad – is the Union between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. By combining the resources of our Union and pooling the expertise of our

citizens in areas such as science and health we have been able to respond to global challenges and project our influence overseas.

We will therefore ensure our international policy thinking is driven by the whole UK. The Integrated Review will announce that the number of staff at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office hub in East Kilbride will increase by 500, taking the total number of jobs now based in Scotland to 1,500. Further jobs will also be created outside of London by the establishment of the new National Cyber Security Force HQ in the North of England and trade hubs in Wales and Northern Ireland. The new trade hubs will work on the same model as the one established in Edinburgh last year.

The UK is a country with uniquely global interests. While our success internationally is built on domestic foundations, our prosperity is inextricably linked to our integration into the global economic and financial system.

With less than 1% of the global population we were the world's 5th biggest exporter in 2019. We sold £690 billion of goods and services to the rest of the world, sustaining millions of jobs – of which three quarters were outside London. The government will therefore prioritise the creation of an open international order where free trade thrives.

We will expand our trading relationships, champion free trade and reinvigorate the World Trade Organisation. The UK is currently negotiating Free Trade Agreements with the US, Australia and New Zealand, and we are applying for accession to the CPTPP. These negotiations and others will help realise the government's manifesto commitment to agree trade agreements with countries covering 80% of UK trade by the end of 2022.

[Prime Minister launches £3 billion bus revolution](#)

- government publishes major new bus strategy, outlining most ambitious reform to the sector in a generation
- buses will be more frequent, cheaper, greener, and easier to use as government continues its levelling up agenda
- councils and operators will work in partnership for the benefit of passengers

Prime Minister Boris Johnson today (15 March 2021) unveils the most ambitious shake-up of the bus sector in a generation, which will see lower, simpler flat fares in towns and cities, turn-up-and-go services on main routes, and new flexible services to reconnect communities.

The government's new bus strategy, backed by £3 billion of investment, will see passengers across England benefiting from more frequent, more reliable, easier to use and understand, better coordinated and cheaper bus services.

Levelling up services across the country will encourage more people to use the bus, rather than the car, as we build back better from the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The changes include:

- simpler bus fares with daily price caps, so people can use the bus as many times a day as they need without facing mounting costs
- more services in the evenings and at the weekends
- integrated services and ticketing across all transport modes, so people can easily move from bus to train
- all buses to accept contactless payments

Hundreds of miles of new bus lanes will make journeys quicker and more reliable, getting people out of their cars, reducing pollution and operating costs.

The [Prime Minister's ten point plan](#) sets out how we will accelerate the transition to greener and more sustainable transport.

We will:

- deliver 4,000 new British-built electric or hydrogen buses will provide clean, quiet, zero-emission travel
- transition cities and regions across England to emission-free buses, safeguarding the UK bus manufacturing industry
- end sales of new diesel buses, and we have launched a consultation on the end date today.

We expect to see local authorities and operators working together to deliver bus services that are so frequent that passengers can just 'turn up and go' – no longer needing to rely on a traditional timetable and having the confidence they won't wait more than a few minutes.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

Buses are lifelines and liberators, connecting people to jobs they couldn't otherwise take, driving pensioners and young people to see their friends, sustaining town centres and protecting the environment.

As we build back from the pandemic, better buses will be one of our first acts of levelling-up.

Just as they did in London, our reforms will make buses the transport of choice, reducing the number of car journeys and improving quality of life for millions.

The fragmented, fully commercialised market, which has operated outside London since 1986 will end. We want to see operators and local councils enter into a statutory “enhanced partnership” or franchising agreements to receive the new funding and deliver the improvements.

It is expected that many councils will choose enhanced partnerships, where local authorities work closely with bus companies, drawing on their operating knowledge and marketing skills. Others may decide that franchising works better for them.

Because of the decline in use caused by the pandemic, bus operators have already received significant emergency support from the government. From this summer, only services under these arrangements will be eligible for continued support or any new sources of funding from the £3 billion transformational investment. The government will also consult later this year on reforming the [Bus Service Operators Grant](#) – the current main stream of government bus funding – to achieve the same objectives.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps, said:

Buses are this country’s favourite way of getting around. They help us get to school, to the GP, or to the shops – but services across England are patchy, and it’s frankly not good enough.

The quality of bus service you receive shouldn’t be dependent on where you live. Everyone deserves to have access to cheap, reliable and quick bus journeys.

The strategy we’re unveiling today will completely overhaul services, ensuring we build back better from the pandemic. Key to it is the new deal it offers to councils – we will provide unprecedented funding, but we need councils to work closely with operators, and the government, to develop the services of the future.

Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands, said:

Buses are the backbone of public transport in the West Midlands, carrying more than 250 million people every year. Today’s strategy is therefore very welcome, and will enable big city regions such as ours to ensure buses remain at the heart of our future transport plans. Residents here want clean, decarbonised buses that are affordable and continue to remain reliable and punctual, and that’s what the new strategy laid out today will deliver.

Anthony Smith, chief executive of independent watchdog Transport Focus, said:

For bus passengers, today’s announcement of more frequent buses and

simpler fares will be welcome news. For many, buses are a lifeline to employment, education, medical appointments and leisure, and are essential to the economy. We know that the key priorities for those considering using the bus are more services running more reliably, providing better value.

Since the pandemic, safety and cleanliness have become ever more important. We will work with bus operators and other partners to make sure passengers' needs are at the heart of new arrangements.

It also sets out ambitions to provide greater access to bus services for all, with plans revealed to require 'next stop' announcements onboard buses throughout Great Britain, helping disabled passengers and others to travel with confidence. The government will also launch a consultation on new regulations to improve access onboard buses for wheelchair users.

London-style services aren't appropriate for all rural and suburban areas, which is why the Department for Transport is today also announcing the recipients of the £20 million from the government's 'Rural mobility fund', which enables on-demand services – such as minibuses booked via an app – to be trialled in areas where a traditional bus service isn't appropriate.