| **Individual Action Plan Update for Australia, January 2014** |
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| ***Highlights of recent policy developments which indicate how Australia is progressing towards the Bogor Goals and key challenges it faces in its efforts to meet the Goals.*** |

| IAP Chapter (Sub-Chapter and Section Heading, if any) | **Improvements made since 2012 IAP** | **Further Improvements Planned** |
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| Tariffs | Australia has continued to improve tariff preferences through implementation of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), including the **Malaysia-Australia FTA (MAFTA)** which entered into force on 1 January 2013. Under this agreement, Australia eliminated all remaining tariffs on Malaysian goods on entry into force of the Agreement.  Cody Wilson – Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade: +61 2 6261 9879  <http://www.dfat.gov.au/fta/mafta>  Reforms were made to concessions available to traders under Schedule 4 of the Customs Tariff Act with a view to simplifying the concessions available and reducing the complexity associated with claiming concessions.  Niraj J. Rao – Australian Customs and Border Protection Service: +61 2 6275 6554   * <http://www.customs.gov.au/> | From 1 January 2015:  MFN Tariffs on apparel and certain finished textile products are set to be reduced from 10 per cent to 5 per cent;  All remaining tariffs on goods from Thailand and Chile will be removed under Australia’s bilateral FTAs with those economies; and  All remaining tariffs on goods from the US will fall to zero.  Tariffs on all goods imported to Australia under the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand FTA will be removed by 2020. |
| Website for further information: | http://www.dfat.gov.au/fta/mafta   * <http://www.customs.gov.au> |  |
| Contact point for further details: | Cody Wilson – Dept. of Foreign Affairs and Trade: +61 2 6261 9879  Niraj J. Rao - Australian Customs and Border Protection Service: +61 2 6275 6554 |  |
| Non-Tariff Measures | **Australian anti-dumping and countervailing system**  Through 2012 and 2013 the Australian Government introduced seven pieces of legislation to implement various reforms to Australia's anti-dumping and countervailing regime.  Implementation of the reforms finished in June 2013 and included:   * establishment of a new appeals process to replace the existing appeals mechanism; * establishment of an industry stakeholder forum; * provisions allowing multiple extensions to investigative timeframes; * amendments to subsidies provisions that more accurately reflect the relevant WTO agreement; * removing the need for a separate review of anti‑dumping measures and a continuation inquiry when they occur in close proximity to one another; * allowing the Minister to utilise additional forms of dumping duty; * creating an inquiry process to investigate the circumvention of anti-dumping measures; * clarified provisions on dealing with parties who do not cooperate with anti-dumping investigations; and * establishment of the Anti‑Dumping Commission as the administering authority of Australia’s anti-dumping system.   Further legislation, which commence on 1 January 2014, implements reforms that:   * remove the mandatory consideration of the lesser duty rule in certain cases; * clarifies the application of retroactive duties; and   introduces a new anti-circumvention review that addresses ineffective measures.  **Trade Remedies (anti-dumping system)**  Over the last few years several measures were implemented to increase the transparency of Australia’s anti-dumping system.  Key changes were made to the Electronic Public Record (EPR) System used by the Commission to increase the transparency of Australia’s anti‑dumping system for all parties. Interested parties are invited to make submissions to every anti-dumping investigation. The EPR makes publicly available the many reports and notices issued by the Commission as well as non‑confidential versions of submissions made by interested parties.  The EPR is located on the Commission’s website at [www.adcommission.gov.au](http://www.adcommission.gov.au)  Changes were also made to the Commission’s reporting of accelerated reviews and duty assessments, which are now subject to public record processes. | In November 2013 further legislation was introduced to improve the effectiveness of Australia’s anti-dumping system.  This legislation, if passed, will take effect in early 2014, and will transfer the Anti-Dumping Commission from the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service to the Department of Industry.  Further legislation to strengthen Australia’s anti-dumping system is planned to be introduced in 2014. |
|  | **Australia’s Biosecurity System**  Since 2012, Australia’s key achievements have been:   * introduction of the Inter-Governmental Agreement on Biosecurity (IGAB) to better manage biosecurity, and the National Biosecurity Environmental Response Agreement to manage incursions of environmental pests and diseases. These agreements came into effect in January 2012; * improving risk-based profiling and inspection processes at airports, mail centres and seaports; and * finalising 13 annexes to the Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Agriculture and the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service to support border operations. * Australia continues to implement the Australian Fumigation Scheme (AFAS) to improve border compliance, which reduces costs and delays for exporters. Twenty-two countries now participate in the AFAS. In 2012, Australia signed 13 agreements with the International Regional Organisation for Plant and Animal Health (OIRSA) which represents nine Central American countries, Chile, Peru, Fiji and Sri Lanka. * Australia has led development of the International Cargo Cooperative Biosecurity Arrangement (ICCBA), a multilateral arrangement to address biosecurity risks associated with the movement of cargo in trade. Designed to improve consultation and build the capacity of trading partners to manage those biosecurity issues, it was finalised and endorsed by 20 countries in June. To date it has been adopted by OIRSA, Fiji, Philippines and Australia. Australia hosts the ICCBA secretariat. * Australia finalised a new import policy for dogs and cats and their semen from approved countries, and has reviewed its import policies for horses from approved countries. These policy reviews have taken into account the latest scientific developments to facilitate trade without compromising biosecurity risk outcomes. For example, the minimum quarantine period for cats and dogs has been reduced from 30 days to 10 days. | Key initiatives to be implemented over the next two years include:   * preparation and construction of a new post entry quarantine facility for high risk plant and animal imports. The facility will be built in two stages with the first operational by 2015 and the second by 2018; * progressing initiatives to improve risk-based intervention; * continuing to improve information and communication technology (ICT) systems, including the development of a new, contemporary Biosecurity Import Conditions database (BICON) to replace the existing (ICON) system; * implementation of a Risk-Return Resource Allocation system to explore the Department of Agriculture’s investment in, and management of, biosecurity risk. This will help the department to better align resource allocation with biosecurity risk; and * progressing initiatives under IGAB to improve Australia’s preparedness capacity and capability, surveillance and diagnostics, the management of established pests and diseases, and government investment and decision making processes.   Australia will continue to keep trading partners informed of the progress of biosecurity initiatives through the SPS Committee, where appropriate, and through the Department of Agriculture’s website:  [www.daff.gov.au](http://www.daff.gov.au) |
| Website for further information: | <http://www.adcommission.gov.au>  http://[www.daff.gov.au](http://www.daff.gov.au) |  |
| *Contact point for further details:* | Kim Farrant – Anti‑Dumping Commission: +61 2 6275 6547  Susan Hardcastle - Department of Agriculture: +61 2 6272 3741 |  |
| ***Services*** | **National Broadband Network**  The former Australian Government established NBN Co Limited (NBN Co) in April 2009 to design, build and operate a new high-speed National Broadband Network (NBN).  The NBN will be Australia’s first national, wholesale-only, open access broadband network offering equivalent terms and conditions to all access seekers or service providers. This is a significant structural change to Australia’s telecommunications industry, aimed at encouraging vibrant retail competition.  As at 28 January 2014, the NBN had been rolled out to 368,300 premises with fibre to the premises technology, with 87,500 active services. The interim satellite service was active for 44,400 premises and the fixed wireless network had been rolled out to 66,300 premises with 7,700 active services.  Commercial services are available in a range of communities across Australia over fibre to the premises, fixed wireless and satellite technologies.  Raoul Raward: NBN Co: +61 2 6271 7099 - [raoul.raward@communications.gov.au](mailto:raoul.raward@communications.gov.au)  Further information can be found at: http://www.nbnco.com.au | The Government is currently undertaking a series of reviews, with the last due to report in mid-2014, which will determine the most appropriate and cost-effective approach to completing the rollout of the NBN. |
|  |  | In November 2013, the Federal Government announced an inquiry into Australia’s financial system. The Inquiry will consult extensively both domestically and internationally before recommending policy options that:   * promote a competitive and stable financial system that contributes to Australia’s productivity growth; * promote the efficient allocation of capital and cost efficient access and services for users; * meets the needs of users with appropriate financial products and services; and * creates an environment conducive to dynamic and innovative financial service providers.   The Inquiry will publish an interim report in mid-2014 setting out initial findings and seek public feedback. A final report is to be presented by November 2014.  Further information can be found at:  <http://jbh.ministers.treasury.gov.au/media-release/037-2013/> |
|  | **1. Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA)**   * The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (TEQSA Act) established TEQSA as an agency. * TEQSA regulates and assures the quality of Australia’s higher education sector. * TEQSA has responsibility under the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act* (ESOS Act) for the following providers:   + higher education providers registered under the TEQSA Act;   + English Language Intensive Course for Overseas Students (ELICOS) providers if they have an entry arrangement with at least one registered higher education provider; and   + foundation program providers: suppliers of nationally-recognised courses designed to equip international students with the skills and capabilities to seek entry into higher education programs in Australia.   **Tuition Protection Service (TPS)**   * The TPS, which commenced on 1 July 2012, is an initiative of the Australian Government to assist and support international students whose education providers are unable to complete the delivery of their course of study. * The service strengthens tuition protection by offering alternative placements (or refunds as a last resort) to students affected by a provider default. * The TPS may also assist where international students have either withdrawn from or not started their course and are eligible for a refund of tuition fees that have not been paid by the provider. * The operations of the TPS are funded through the collection of an annual TPS levy which is paid by all Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) providers.   The TPS provisions replaced the two-tiered consumer protection arrangements which operated under the ESOS Act prior to 30 June 2012 and which encompassed a number of Tuition Assurance Schemes operated by private sector bodies and the Australian Government’s ESOS Assurance Fund. |  |
|  | **2.** The Australian **Vocational Education and Training** (VET) system has quality assurance frameworks in place, encompassing national standards, a national regulator, and a national framework for qualifications. These quality assurance frameworks help to ensure students and employers have confidence that the VET system is providing high quality education and training delivery, assessment and qualification outcomes.  National Skills Standards Council (NSSC)   * The national standards for VET govern the registration and operation of training providers, accreditation of courses, data provision requirements and training package development and endorsement. The NSSC, established in 2011, is responsible for the development, maintenance and review of the national standards for VET. In 2013, the NSSC undertook a broad-ranging review of the VET standards for regulation. A draft of these will be forwarded to the next meeting of the Standing Council on Tertiary Education Skills and Employment (SCOTESE) in 2014   Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)   * Established in July 2011, ASQA is the national regulator for VET, provides greater national consistency in the way training providers are registered, courses are accredited and the quality of the system is monitored. * ASQA also has compliance and enforcement responsibilities in relation to the ESOS Act for providers registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) that offer VET courses.   Other recent activities in Australia’s VET sector:   * Australia is developing minimum reporting requirements for VET training providers through total VET activity reporting. This will provide a national data set which will assist in building a better understanding of the sector and measure the impact of Government initiatives and reform. * A unique student identifier (USI) is being developed for the VET sector. The USI will make it easier for students to find, collate and authenticate their VET achievements from 1 January 2014 and will provide a way to track individual students as they move through VET and enable more accurate evaluation of the VET system. * Australia has a national register listing all registered training providers and endorsed/accredited qualifications – [www.training.gov.au](http://www.training.gov.au)   Australia has developed a website portal – My Skills –designed to assist individuals and employers looking to undertake training with training organisations that best suit their needs. [www.myskills.gov.au](http://www.myskills.gov.au) |  |
| *Website for further information:* | TEQSA: <http://www.teqsa.gov.au>  TPS: <https://tps.gov.au>  AQSA: http://[www.asqa.gov.au](http://www.asqa.gov.au)  My Skills: http://www.myskills.gov.au |  |
| *Contact point for further details:* | Jarrod Campbell - Dept. of Industry (TEQSA/TPS): [jarrod.campbell@industry.gov.au](mailto:jarrod.campbell@industry.gov.au)  Sophia Vincent – Dept. of Innovation (VET): sophia[.vincent@innovation.gov.au](mailto:.vincent@innovation.gov.au) |  |
| ***Investment*** | A summary of Australia’s Foreign Investment Policy is available at: <http://www.firb.gov.au/content/policy.asp?NavID=1>  Most recent figure for the stock of foreign direct investment in Australia is $595 billion as at 30 June 2013.  Further liberalisation of Australia’s foreign investment regime took place in 2013, including:   * the coming into force of the Protocol on Investment to the Australia-New Zealand Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement on 1 March 2013, which extended the higher monetary thresholds that currently apply to United States investors under the Australia-United States Free Trade Agreement to New Zealand investors; and * updates to Australia’s Foreign Investment Policy that improved its clarity and consistency, making it easier for foreign investors to understand their obligations.Updates included a relaxation from notification for foreign government banks that take security when lending, unless they later enforce the security and hold the assets for more than 12 months, and clearer definitions of ‘direct investment’ and ‘new business’.   The Foreign Investment Review Board (FIRB) has published annual reports to the Australian Parliament (for the years 1996-2012 inclusive) which illustrate results of the screening process.  The most recent report is available at [www.firb.gov.au](http://www.firb.gov.au/) along with policy summaries and other relevant information for foreign investors seeking to invest in Australia. |  |
| *Website for further information:* | [www.firb.gov.au](http://www.firb.gov.au/) |  |
| Contact point for further details: | Stewart Nixon - The Treasury: +61 2 6263 2764 |  |
| ***Standards and Conformance*** | **Standards Development**  Of the total catalogue of Australian Standards approximately 38 per cent of these are identical or aligned to international standards.  Australia participates actively in international standardisation activities. Standards Australia is the secretariat for 23 ISO and IEC technical committees, and subcommittees. Standards Australia currently holds 353 ‘P’ memberships and 188 ‘O’ memberships on ISO and IEC technical committees and subcommittees.  **Conformity Assessment**  The National Association of Testing Authorities, Australia (NATA) has signatory status in all areas of the Asia-Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC) Mutual Recognition Arragement and is also a signatory to the global International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) MRA for testing, calibration and inspection. Inspection was added to the coverage of the ILAC MRA in October 2012.  NATA staff have attended meetings and contributed to the work of the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) committees revising ISO/IEC 17020 (inspection) and ISO 15189 (medical testing). Revised versions of these standards were issued in 2012.  The Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand (JAS-ANZ) has recently been re-evaluated as a signatory to the PAC Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA). The re-evaluation took into account the scope of its Quality Management Systems (QMS), Environmental Management Systems (EMS) and Product certification systems and an initial evaluation for Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS).  JAS-ANZ is also a signatory to the IAF MLA for Quality Management Systems (QMS), Environmental Management Systems (EMS) and Product certification  JAS-ANZ has been re-evaluated as a signatory to the APLAC MRA for Inspection. JAS-ANZ is a signatory to the ILAC MRA for Inspection.  JAS-ANZ staff hold the following international positions; Chair of PAC, Chair IAF MLA Committee both Chairs are members of the IAF and joint IAF and ILAC Executive Committees and the Chair of the IAF Food Working Group. JAS-ANZ also provides staff to participate as experts on ISO CASCO working groups for the development of international standards on conformity assessment.  **Measurement**  As Australia’s peak measurement body, the National Measurement Institute, Australia (NMIA), is Australia’s signatory to the International Committee for Weights & Measures Mutual Recognition Arrangement (the CIPM MRA) as well as the Mutual Acceptance Arrangement (MAA) of the International Organization for Legal Metrology (OIML). As at December 2013, 93 national and international institutes have signed the CIPM MRA. Three Declarations of Mutual Confidence (DoMCs) were signed at the outset of the MAA implementation in December 2013, these include 22 participating countries.  Information regarding NMIA and its activities can be found at: [www.measurement.gov.au](http://www.measurement.gov.au/)  <http://www.aplac.org>  [www.nata.com.au](http://www.nata.com.au)  <http://www.apec-pac.org/>  <http://www.iaf.nu>  <http://www.iso.org/iso/resources/conformity_assessment/objectives_and_structure_of_casco.htm> | **NATA** will continue to actively promote the acceptance by regulators and other specifiers of accreditation and the voluntary sector of the APLAC and ILAC MRAs as a means of providing confidence in conformity assessment activities domestically, regionally and internationally.  **NATA** has applied to be a signatory to the APLAC MRA for medical testing (ISO 15189) and the inaugural APLAC MRA for Proficiency Testing Service Providers. These will be reviewed in 2015.  JAS-ANZ will extend their signatory status to the PAC and IAF MLAs to include Certification of Persons, Information Security Management Systems, Green House Gas and Medical Devices over this period.  JAS-ANZ will continue to establish bi-lateral arrangements with accreditation bodies in other economies to foster closer cooperation and improvement.  **NMIA** is currently delivering against its unified strategic plan (2012-2014) to address Australia’s on-going and future measurement requirements. As of January 2013, NMIA has established a new “sector-based” strategic planning process which will form the basis of its next strategic plan from 2014. |
|  | ***Appropriate stnadards of animal and plant health, and food safety***  Australia’s standard setting bodies in the fields of **animal and plant health, food safety** and other aspects of human health have adopted international standards as appropriate. |  |
|  | ***Active participation in the activities of international standardizing bodies***  Australia continues to have a high level of involvement in Codex, the Office International des Epizooties (OIE) and the International Plant Protection Commission (IPPC).  Australia currently participates in all active Codex committees.  Australia has high-level management roles in the Codex Alimentarius as:   * Host and Chair of CCFICS (Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems); and   as advisor to the Regional representative for the South West Pacific Region on Codex Executive Committee. | Food Standards Australia New Zealand is continuing to develop primary production and processing standards for Australia that will be outcome-based, focus on food safety and apply throughout the supply chain. The new standards will be consistent with the principles and approaches of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, as well as its specific standards such as in the areas of seafood and dairy. |
|  | Participate in relevant international fora Within the limits of its resources, Australia has been an active member and participant in relevant international fora including:  the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies. | For the foreseeable future, Australia will continue to be an active participant in relevant international fora. |
| *Website for further information:* | <http://www.codexalimentarius.org/> |  |
| *Contact point for further details:* | Joseph Shifra - Department of Industry: [shifra.joseph@industry.gov.au](mailto:shifra.joseph@industry.gov.au%20)  Ann Backhouse - Department of Agriculture: [ann.backhouse@daff.gov.au](mailto:ann.backhouse@daff.gov.au) |  |
| ***Customs Procedures*** | *See tariff and non-tariff sections* | Implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement |
| *Website for further information:* | www.customs.gov.au |  |
| *Contact point for further details:* | Mark Collidge:Australian Custom Services: +61 2 6275 6441  [mark.collidge@customs.gov.au](mailto:mark.collidge@customs.gov.au) |  |
| ***Intellectual Property Rights*** | **The Intellectual Property Laws Amendment (Raising the Bar) Act 2012**  This Act came into full effect on 15 April 2013.  The Act addressed issues raised in a number of reviews of Australia’s IP system, suggestions from stakeholders, IP Australia and other government agencies, and elements of the former Government’s innovation agenda ‘Powering Ideas’.  The Act consists of six schedules:   * Schedule 1 - Raising the quality of granted patents * Schedule 2 - Free access to patented inventions for regulatory approvals and research * Schedule 3 - Reducing delays in resolution of patent and trade mark applications * Schedule 4 - Assisting the operation of IP professionals * Schedule 5 - Improving mechanisms for trade mark and copyright enforcement * Schedule 6 - Simplifying the IP system.   Information on the Act can be found at: <http://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/about-us/ip-legislation-changes/ip-laws-amendment-act-2012/> | **Implementation of the Protocol amending the WTO Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights** **(TRIPS Protocol)**  The Australian Government has drafted legislation to implement the TRIPS Protocol. The drafted changes will enable Australian medicine producers to apply to the Federal Court for a compulsory license to manufacture and export patented pharmaceuticals to countries experiencing health crises. Adequate compensation will be negotiated for the patent holder, to ensure that they are not disadvantaged by the arrangements. |
|  | **Modernisation of IP Australia’s Customer Communications Channel**  During 2012-13, IP Australia continued the Integrated Customer Service Delivery (ICSD) Program. The program will provide a one-stop shop for IP customers to pay and submit all their transactions online via two channels: eServices and Business-to-Business (B2B).  EServices allows customers to establish a user identity and submit a range of IP rights transactions electronically through the IP Australia website. It is designed to cater for self-filers and small to medium enterprises.  The B2B channel is a fully automated transaction portal that facilitates the direct transfer of IP rights transactions from a customer’s business system to IP Australia’s business systems. B2B is designed to cater for the needs of high-volume users, such as annuity firms and large attorney firms.  Future work will provide electronic correspondence delivered via eServices and B2B.  Further information about eServices and B2B is on IP Australia’s website: [www.ipaustralia.gov.au](http://www.ipaustralia.gov.au)  Contact: Constantine Nikolakopoulos: IP Aust. +61 2 6283 3156 | **Modernisation of IP Australia’s Customer Communications Channel – future developments**  In 2014, IP Australia plans to introduce electronic correspondence for eServices and B2B customers to further streamline processes. |
|  |  | **Advisory Council on Intellectual Property (ACIP) reviews**  ACIP is currently undertaking two reviews:   * Review of the Innovation Patent System. The Australian Government requested that ACIP investigate the effectiveness of the innovation patent system in stimulating innovation by Australian small to medium business enterprises. ACIP hopes to deliver its final report in early 2014. * Review of the Designs System. The Australian Government requested that the ACIP investigate the effectiveness of the designs system in stimulating innovation by Australian users and the impact the designs system has on economic growth. As part of its investigations, ACIP released an Issues paper in September 2013 to seek views from stakeholders, including users of the designs system. ACIP hopes to deliver its final report in 2014.   More information on these ACIP reviews and other reviews completed by ACIP can be found at: <http://www.acip.gov.au/> |
|  |  | **Trans-Tasman Single Economic Market (SEM)**  As part of the Australian and New Zealand Governments’ Single Economic Market (SEM) agenda, intellectual property (IP) outcomes include a single trans-Tasman regulatory framework for patent attorneys and single trans-Tasman patent application and examination processes. Legislative amendments that are required in both Australia and New Zealand to give effect to these IP outcomes are currently being progressed in both jurisdictions.  A high level model for the single examination process (SEP) has been agreed to. Under the SEP one examiner will simultaneously examine equivalent applications filed in Australia and New Zealand. Examination of patent applications will be combined, but separate patents will be issued for each jurisdiction. Depending on the timing of the legislation, a pilot program is planned to commence in early to mid-2015. Further work on implementation of the single application process will be undertaken during 2014-15 financial year.  Further information is available at: <http://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/about-us/what-we-do/international-activity/single-economic-market/> |
|  |  | **Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) report on copyright**  The ALRC has completed an inquiry which examined whether the exceptions and statutory licenses in the *Copyright Act 1968* are adequate and appropriate in the digital environment. The ALRC provided the final inquiry report to the Attorney-General on 2 December 2013. It will be made public when the Attorney-General tables the report in Parliament in either December 2013 or February 2014. More information about the ALRC’s inquiry can be found at:  http://www.alrc.gov.au/inquiries/copyright-and-digital-economy  Contact: Sam Ahlin - Sam.Ahlin@ag.gov.au |
| Website for further information: | http://[www.ipaustralia.gov.au](http://www.ipaustralia.gov.au)  <http://www.acip.gov.au/> |  |
| Contact point for further details: | Constantine Nikolakopoulos: IP Australia: +61 2 6283 3156 |  |
| ***Competition Policy*** | The *Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (CCA) provides the legal framework for Australia’s competition and consumer policy rules, which are designed to make markets work efficiently for the benefit of consumers.  The CCA continued to be rigorously enforced by Australia’s competition regulator, the **Australian Competition and Consumer Commission** (ACCC). Over the course of 2012-13, the ACCC successfully concluded a number of court actions against companies engaged in anti-competitive practices. This included five first-instance competition proceedings relating to the Air Cargo freight cartel, bringing penalties imposed on that cartel to almost $100 million.  The ACCC also continued its role in relation to price monitoring in industries such as the Australian petroleum industry. The ACCC published a report into the prices, costs and profits of unleaded petrol in Australia in late 2012 for the 2011-12 year, and in December 2013 for the 2012-13 year. Further information is available on the ACCC’s website.  Australia has undertaken substantial cross-jurisdictional reforms as part of the *National Partnership Agreement to Deliver a Seamless National Economy*. This has included a range of reforms to encourage competition in key sectors such as energy, transport and infrastructure. This agreement concluded on 31 December 2012. Further information about the progress of these reforms is available on the website for the Council of Australian Governments (COAG): <http://www.coag.gov.au/>  In December 2012, COAG agreed a package of reforms to the energy market regulatory framework to put downward pressure on electricity prices in the long-term.  The **Productivity Commission** is Australia’s independent research and advisory body on a range of economic, social and environmental issues affecting the welfare of Australians.  In 2013, the Commission reviewed Australia’s *National Access Regime*, which is a regulatory framework through which third parties may seek access to nationally significant infrastructure services and includes Part IIIA of the CCA.  The Commission also reviewed *Australia’s Electricity Network Regulatory Frameworks*, focussing on benchmarking arrangements and the effectiveness of the application by network businesses of the current regulatory regime for the evaluation and development of inter-regional network capacity in the National Electricity Market (NEM).  In November 2013, the Commission commenced an inquiry into ways to encourage private financing and funding for major infrastructure projects. As part of this, the Commission will review costs, competitiveness and productivity in the provision of nationally significant economic infrastructure. This includes examining ways to reduce infrastructure construction costs and address any barriers to private sector financing.  Further information is available on the Commission’s website: <http://www.accc.gov.au/> | In December 2013, Australia announced that it is undertaking a review of the competition framework to ensure that its competition laws remain robust and effective into the future.  The review will be an independent examination of how the competition framework is working, whether it is keeping up with emerging trends, and looking beyond the competition framework to identify impediments to competition with the goal of improvingthe living standards of all Australians. |
| Website for further information: | <http://www.accc.gov.au/>  <http://www.coag.gov.au/>  http://www.pc.gov.au |  |
| Contact point for further details: | Tina Smith - The Treasury: +61 2 6263 2807 |  |
| ***Government Procurement*** | An extensive review of the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines (CPGs) was undertaken to:   * refine their scope; * improve useability and readability; * redefine procurement methods; and * clarify procurement obligations and better practice.   The CPGs were subsequently updated and reissued as the Commonwealth Procurement Rules (CPRs) on 1 July 2012.  A standard suite of contract documents for low risk procurements under $80,000 was introduced for use across the Commonwealth. | Development of a standard suite of contract documents for low risk procurements valued up to $200,000 for use across the Commonwealth. This builds on the existing standard suite of contract documents for low risk procurements under $80,000. |
| Website for further information: | http://www.finance.gov.au/procurement/ |  |
| *Contact point for further details:* | Procurement Policy Branch - Department of Finance: gptrade@finance.gov.au |  |
| ***Deregulation/Regulatory Review*** | **A New Agenda to Boost Productivity and Reduce Regulation**  The Australian Government has announced an extensive new reform agenda to reduce regulation and boost Australia’s productivity.  This agenda is underpinned by a broad framework of institutional structures, mechanisms and tools that establish deregulation as an explicit priority. All Government Ministers and their departments are accountable for the agenda’s success.  An Office of Deregulation has been established to coordinate whole of government implementation of the agenda. This Office reports directly to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet on progress.  Deregulation Units have been established in Government departments to coordinate regulation reduction in each Minister’s portfolio and report to Government annually.  The Government has strengthened the Regulatory Impact Analysis (RIA) framework, with a focus on costing impacts on business, community organisations, and individuals. The framework will continue to be overseen by the Office of Best Practice Regulation.  As an interim arrangement, the current Best Practice Regulation Handbook (issued in July 2013) will apply but will be supplemented with some important modifications. The key modifications are:   * all Cabinet submissions, including those that are non-regulatory in nature, require a Regulation Impact Statement (RIS); * all RISs must quantify the regulatory burden to business, community organisations, and/or individuals of new regulationsand identify reductions in regulatory burden to offset the cost to business, community organisations, and/or individuals of new regulations; and * the requirement for a RIS has been expanded to capture proposals with more than minor impacts on individuals, as well as business and community organisations as per previous RIA arrangements.   The term ‘new regulations’ also encompasses revisions or amendments to existing regulations. | The Government is reducing the regulatory burden for individuals, businesses and community organisations by targeting the removal of $1 billion of regulation across Government every year. This annual target is supported by incentives and mechanisms to achieve meaningful reductions in regulation over time:   * all existing regulation will be audited by Government departments to determine its cost and to target reform of the most significant areas of regulatory burden; * appointments and remuneration of senior management in Government departments will be linked to performance in reducing regulatory burden; * business, not for profit organisations and other stakeholders will be consulted on regulatory policy through new advisory bodies in each Government portfolio; * a forward work programme of review and repeal priorities is being established; * in-depth reviews of regulation will be undertaken within specific sectors and after implementation of regulation; * at least two Parliamentary sitting days are being set aside each year to repeal counterproductive, unnecessary or redundant regulation; * Government departments will report annually to the Australian Parliament on progress with red tape reduction; and * Regulator performance will be audited * A new Best Practice Regulation Handbook will be issued once the Government’s arrangements are settled in detail. |
|  | **Wheat export marketing arrangements**  The *Wheat Export Marketing Amendment Act 2012* (the Act) was passed by the Parliament on 29 November 2012 and received Royal Assent on 3 December 2012. The Act removed the Wheat Export Charge and the Wheat Export Accreditation Scheme on 10 December 2012, and abolished Wheat Exports Australia on 31 December 2012.  The Act required the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry to establish a Wheat Industry Advisory Taskforce.  The taskforce will examine and make recommendations to industry and government on issues that may affect the efficient operation of the wheat export industry supply chain, including wheat export quality management practices and the delivery of stocks information. Its final report is due by 1 July 2014.  The requirement for certain port terminal operators to have access undertakings in place with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission will remain in place until 30 September 2014, subject to a mandatory code of conduct for grain export terminals being in place by that date.  To assist in the development of the code, an industry Code Development Advisory Committee was formed, comprising representation across the supply chain. The committee has provided advice to the government for consideration in the development of a draft code which will be released for public comment before implementation. |  |
| *Website for further information:* | <http://www.dpmc.gov.au/deregulation/obpr/index.cfm> |  |
| *Contact point for further details:* | Adrian Chippindale – Office of Best Practice Regulation, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet: + 61 2 6215 1914  Joanna Hearne - Office of Deregulation, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet: + 61 2 6271 5527 |  |
| ***Implementation of WTO Obligations/ROOs*** | No further update. |  |
| *Website for further information:* |  |  |
| *Contact point for further details:* |  |  |
| ***Dispute Mediation*** | No further update. |  |
| *Website for further information:* |  |  |
| *Contact point for further details:* |  |  |
| ***Mobility of Business People*** | **APEC Business Travel Card**  Australia assisted the APEC Secretariat in the creation of the new Business Mobility Group website <http://travel.apec.org> in 2012 and coordinated updated content with economies. This new website includes the APEC Business Travel Handbook.  Following consultation with business throughout 2011 and 2012, Australia implemented its new ABTC eligibltiy criteria. The criteria better recognise the broad range of Australian employees that businesses rely on to conduct trade and investment activities on their behalf and ensure that small to medium sized businesses enjoyed the same level of access to the APEC Business Travel Card as large global companies.  Australia maintained its entries in the online APEC Business Travel Handbook and on its official economy immigration website, to ensure clear and comprehensive information is available to the APEC business community, including on:   * the permissible business activities of short-term business visitors * the employment rights of temporary business residents and their spouses and dependents * the place and method of visa lodgement, visa validity period and maximum period of stay.   Australia also coordinated the updating of members’ information on economies’ temporary business entry arrangements, APEC Business Travel Card (ABTC) airport lane arrangements, and related ABTC period of stay permitted and average application processing times.  **Visa Simplification and Deregulation – simplified temporary work visas**  On 24 November 2012, the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) introduced a simplified Temporary Work visa framework. The new framework reduced the number of Temporary Work visa subclasses from 17 to 8.  For further information on these changes, please see: <http://www.immi.gov.au/visas/temporary-visa/>  **Working Holiday Maker Visas**  These visas provide young adults from partner economies, aged 18 to 30, with the opportunity to experience an extended holiday in Australia during which they can engage in short-term work or study.  For improvements made since 2012 IAP Update, see: <http://www.immi.gov.au/visitors/working-holiday/whats-new.htm>  **Pacific Seasonal Worker Scheme**  This scheme is part of the department's Special Program and requires Approved Employers to invite people from the eligible Pacific economies to participate as Pacific seasonal workers.  For improvements made since 2012 IAP Update, see:  <http://www.immi.gov.au/Visas/Pages/416-swp.aspx>  **Temporary Skilled Migration**  The temporary business (long stay)(subclass 457) visa allows Australian and overseas businesses to sponsor skilled overseas workers in a range of eligible occupations.  For improvements made since 2012 IAP Update, see:  <http://www.immi.gov.au/skilled/whats-new-esw.htm>  **Employer Sponsored Workers**  The Employer Nomination Scheme (ENS) enables employers to sponsor highly skilled workers to fill skilled vacancies in their business.  For improvements made since 2012 IAP Update, see:  <http://www.immi.gov.au/skilled/whats-new-esw.htm#12sept> | Australia is the Project Overseer for an APEC Project for an End to End Review of the APEC Business Travel Card Scheme. This review will be undertaken in 2014 and will provide recommendations to the Business Mobility Group on possible enhancements to the ABTC Scheme, including opportunities for online lodgement.  Australia will continue to assist member economies to update their information on temporary business entry arrangements in the Business Mobility Group (BMG) website.  On behalf of the BMG, Australia continues to review and update all general information contained in the BMG website about the BMG, the APEC Business Travel Card (ABTC) scheme, work plan activities and current and future projects. |
| *Website for further information:* | <http://travel.apec.org>  <http://www.immi.gov.au> |  |
| *Contact point for further details:* | Christian Cannock - Department of Immigration and Border Protection: [apec@immi.gov.au](mailto:apec@immi.gov.au) |  |
| *Official websites that gather economies’ information* | **Anti‑Dumping Commission Website**  The Anti‑Dumping Commission investigates allegations of dumping and countervailiable subsidies causing injury to domestic producers of like products. Information on anti-dumping cases, including reporting dates, investigation reports, notices and outcomes is available on the Commission’s website at [www.adcommission.gov.au](http://www.adcommission.gov.au). Reference material on Australia’s anti-dumping system is also available.  Kim Farrant – Anti‑Dumping Commission: +61 2 6275 6976 |  |
|  | **The Australian Bureau of Statistics**  http://www.abs.gov.au/ |  |
|  | **Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**  The department provides foreign, trade and development policy advice to the government. We work with other government agencies to ensure that Australia’s pursuit of its global, regional and bilateral interests is coordinated effectively.  http://www.dfat.gov.au/ |  |
|  | Australian Customs and Border Protection  Australian Customs and Border Protection Service manage the security and integrity of Australia's borders. It works closely with other government and international agencies to detect and deter unlawful movement of goods and people across the border.  **http://www.customs.gov.au/default.asp** |  |
|  | Department of Immigration and Border Protection  http://www.immi.gov.au/Pages/Welcome.aspx |  |
|  | Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences  ABARES conducts research and analysis of key issues affecting world markets for major agricultural commodities. ABARES collects and publishes statistical information relating to Australian and world agricultural commodity production and trade.  http://www.daff.gov.au/abares |  |
| ***Transparency*** | No further update. |  |
| *Website for further information:* |  |  |
| *Contact point for further details:* |  |  |

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| **RTAs/FTAs** | | |
| ***-*** ***Description of new agreements*** | MAFTA, the Malaysia-Australia FTA, was signed in May 2012 and entered into force on 1 January 2013.  MAFTA builds on Australia’s existing commitments to Malaysia under AANZFTA. It includes coverage of trade in goods, trade in services and investment  Further information is available from <http://dfat.gov.au/fta/mafta/>  Australia and Korea concluded FTA negotiations in December 2013. The FTA will be signed and come into operation following domestic approval processes in Australia and Korea.  Further information is available from <http://www.dfat.gov.au/fta/akfta/> |
| ***- Agreements under negotiation*** | Australia is negotiating bilateral free trade agreements with Japan, China, Indonesia and India. Australia is a participant in the negotiations towards a Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which include 11 other APEC economies. Australia is also participating in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations with Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Singapore, Peru, United States and Vietnam. Australia commenced negotiations in 2007 with the Gulf Cooperation Council (comprising Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) and in 2009 with Pacific Island Forum countries (Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu).  Further information about these negotiations is set out on the website of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (www.dfat.gov.au). |
| ***-*** ***Future plans*** |  |
| Website for further information: |  |
| Contact point for further details: |  |

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| ***Other voluntary reporting areas*** | *Nil* |  |