



**Export Council of Australia**

The Voice for Australia's Exporters

## New Trade Policy Recommendations Urges Government to Keep Eyes on the Prize

**Friday 31/03/2017**

As Australia's voice for exporters, the Export Council of Australia (ECA) today releases its annual Trade Policy Recommendations; *A prosperous future for all Australians through international trade.*

ECA CEO Lisa McAuley says it is a dangerous time for international trade. In recent decades, we have seen a slow but steady march towards increasingly open global markets. But developments in 2016 show that progress can potentially be undone very quickly."

"Now more than ever, we must fight to support our exporters. We must protect the access we have in current FTA markets, and improve our access to other markets by entering new agreements"

"The objective of our recommendations is to ensure Australian businesses, particularly SMEs have the best possible market access and are as competitive as possible when they trade internationally," Ms McAuley said.

The ECA makes nine recommendations to government on how to achieve this objective.

ECA Head of Policy, Heath Baker says our recommendations cover four broad areas: government support, market access, access to finance and advocacy for trade.

"First, government should better support exporters by developing a national strategy for trade, a coherent national brand, and a single window for trade to simplify the export process. The government should also have a far greater focus on supporting service exports."

"Second, the government should look to expand access to new markets by negotiating new trade agreements, and seek to identify and remove major non-tariff measures impeding exports. It should stimulate trade with developing countries in our region by expanding the aid for trade program, building the private sectors of developing countries and improving their trade infrastructure.

"Third, the government should help SMEs better access finance. Adequately resourcing the Export Market Development Grant to give exporters their full grant entitlement is fundamental., Mr Baker said".

"Finally," Ms McAuley said "Both sides of government must strongly and effectively prosecute the arguments for trade and open markets. One cannot forget the old expression Riding of the Sheep's back, as international trade and investment have been essential to Australia's past and will be to its future. The government has a duty to ensure Australians understand the importance of trade and investment to their lives."

You can download the ECA's 2017 Trade Policy Recommendations here: [www.export.org.au/publications/trade-policy-recommendations-4-0-2017](http://www.export.org.au/publications/trade-policy-recommendations-4-0-2017)

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