



ECA APPLAUDS AUSTRALIA'S LEADING ROLE IN WORKING TOWARD RULES FOR DIGITAL TRADE AT WTO

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Open, transparent and rules-based international trade are critical to Australia's economic prosperity. The Export Council of Australia (ECA) therefore applauds the Australian government's leading efforts in establishing a work program to set rules for digital trade at the 11th World Trade Organisation's (WTO) Ministerial Conference (MC11) this week in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

As noted by Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment Mr Steven Ciobo, this initiative will put in place a framework to shape the rules of international e-commerce in the years to come. It includes 70 of the WTO's 164 members that collectively account for over 75% of global trade, including the United States, Japan and the European Union.

It will assist in implementing basic standards for digital trade in areas like consumer protection and electronic contracts. Such standards may play a critical role in removing barriers and complexities to digital trade, with studies finding that around 70 regional trade agreements around the world currently include chapters on e-commerce.

"E-commerce, digital trade and the tech start-ups they foster are increasingly important elements of Australia's trade future. Creating certainty around digital rules and regulations will therefore allow companies in Australia's digital economy to confidently explore opportunities around the world," says Lisa McAuley, Strategic Advisor to the ECA.

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