



Export Council of Australia

The Voice for Australia's Exporters

Australia Poised to enter International Government Procurement Arena

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Following on from last year's trifecta of Free Trade Agreements the Export Council of Australia (ECA) applauds the announcement today that Australia has officially launched its bid to join the World Trade Organisation Agreement on Government Procurement (GPA). This plurilateral agreement will offer Australian businesses legally-binding access to government procurement markets estimated at USD1.7 trillion.

Expanding the number of procurement markets Australian companies have access to while providing the certainty of a 'multilateral rules-based system' is a highly desirable outcome and the ECA fully supports the Australian Government's commitment to opening new legally guaranteed export market access opportunities for Australian business.

Chief Executive Officer for the Export Council of Australia Lisa McAuley says the ECA strongly supports Australia pursuing this opportunity as the GPA is as significant international agreement and government procurement is big business".

"Increasing trade and investment is absolutely crucial to unlocking Australia's future economic growth and joining the GPA will help achieve this by providing Australian businesses with greater certainty and transparency when competing in GPA markets. It will also level the playing field with local competitors," Ms McAuley said.

Australia's procurement market is already integrated with New Zealand, and Australian suppliers also have legally-binding access to the procurement markets of the US, Singapore, Chile, South Korea and Japan through our bilateral FTAs.

Accession to the GPA will allow Australian supplier's access to the government procurement markets of the 43 WTO member countries currently party to the agreement including the EU and its 28 member states. With 10 additional parties presently in GPA accession talks, most notably China, Australia will be set to benefit further from access to future GPA market expansion.

The GPA's main principles are transparency and non-discrimination, requiring GPA members to offer other members' suppliers conditions 'no less favourable' than domestic suppliers. Australian business' interests will be protected by this agreement through review rights for firms, which allows aggrieved companies the right to take a complaint to an independent review body in each jurisdiction.

"Practical education around Government procurement markets will also be a crucial element to assist companies in not only identifying the potential opportunities but also educating them on the complexities of Doing Business with Government," Ms McAuley said.

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About the Export Council of Australia The Export Council of Australia is the peak Industry body for the Australian export community. The ECA is the next exciting step in the evolution of the Australian Institute of Export (AIE) which, for over 50 years, has had the interests of Australian exporters at heart.

