

# **FIRST JOINT COMMISSION MEETING OF THE HONG KONG, CHINA – AUSTRALIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT**

**29 JUNE 2022**

## **SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES**

1. The first Joint Commission Meeting of the Hong Kong, China (HKC) – Australia Free Trade Agreement (FTA) was held virtually on 29 June 2022.
2. The meeting was co-chaired by Mr Francis Ho, Acting Director-General of Trade and Industry, Trade and Industry Department in the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and Ms Elisabeth Bowes, First Assistant Secretary and Chief Negotiator, Regional Trade Agreements Division in the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
3. The Joint Commission noted the significance of bilateral trade and investment ties between HKC and Australia, which had continued to thrive notwithstanding disruptions stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Joint Commission agreed that the FTA and the related Investment Agreement were instrumental to strengthening the bilateral ties since the entry into force of the agreements on 17 January 2020, and acknowledged that further benefits could be expected over time. The Co-Chairs also appreciated that officials had been working closely on implementation of the agreements since their entry into force and agreed that there were opportunities for further cooperation and promotion within the business community.
4. The Co-Chairs discussed the matters under the built-in agenda. The Joint Commission agreed that officials undertake a review of the accumulation provisions. The Joint Commission discussed the commitment for Most-Favoured-Nation treatment in trade in services and agreed to exchange views on the applicable practices of both sides in order to clarify and give effect to such treatment, as necessary. The Joint Commission also agreed to exchange views and information on experiences with free trade agreement reviews.
5. The Joint Commission noted there had been progress on mutual recognition discussion and agreements in professional services, including in accounting and medical services. Officials agreed to facilitate, as needed, professional bodies' further discussions on mutual recognition for landscape architects and speech pathologists. The Joint Commission also agreed that officials meet to follow up on the Side Letters on professional services and legal services by exploring ways to facilitate recognition of existing relevant professional experience; and advancing Mode 3 (commercial presence) commitments on legal services by HKC respectively.
6. The Joint Commission agreed that officials discuss further cooperation in accordance with the Side Letter on government procurement, noting particular interest in conditions for participation and prequalification requirements for contractors in public works procurement.

7. The Joint Commission agreed that officials commence discussions on the transposition of Product Specific Rules (PSR) into the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System for 2022 (HS2022), with Australia to prepare a first draft of the PSR schedule.
8. The Joint Commission discussed foreign investment policy and reforms in Australia, and agreed to further dialogue to exchange information and foreign investment updates between both Parties, as needed.
9. The Joint Commission discussed HKC's interest in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (RCEP). HKC reiterated its interest in joining the RCEP and readiness for commencing substantive discussions with RCEP members. Australia noted that RCEP would not be open for accession for 18 months after entry into force, from July 2023.
10. The Joint Commission acknowledged HKC's briefings, as requested by Australia, on the latest development in its copyright reforms and the Guangdong-Hong-Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Initiative.
11. The Joint Commission agreed to convene the second meeting in early 2024.