



# Department for International Trade

The Rt Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP  
Secretary of State for International Trade  
Department for International Trade  
Old Admiralty Building  
London  
SW1A 2DY

The Hon Dan Tehan MP  
Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

T +44 (0) 20 7215 5000  
E [trevelyan.correspondence@trade.gov.uk](mailto:trevelyan.correspondence@trade.gov.uk)  
W [www.gov.uk/dit](http://www.gov.uk/dit)

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Dear Minister Tehan,

In connection with the signing of the Free Trade Agreement between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Australia (“the Agreement”), I have the honour to confirm the following mutual understanding reached between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (“the United Kingdom”) and the Government of Australia (“Australia”) during the course of the negotiation of the Agreement:

1. The United Kingdom and Australia recognise the importance of their respective health care systems.
2. Improving public health and addressing the inequality of health outcomes is a key priority for both countries. The United Kingdom and Australia share a commitment to tackle obesity, reduce tobacco use and prevent and minimise alcohol-related harms. Progress to address these modifiable risk factors is critical to reducing the incidence of non-communicable diseases such as cancer, chronic respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes.
3. The United Kingdom and Australia face similar opportunities and challenges in the development and delivery of public health policy and have a history of public health collaboration. Both countries continue to lead the way globally in tobacco control policy. However, they are facing similar challenges in addressing increasing rates of overweight and obesity as well as preventing and minimising alcohol-related harms. They recognise the value of working closely together to further shared public health objectives and building momentum for greater action on public health internationally.
4. The United Kingdom and Australia recognise the COVID-19 pandemic has elevated the focus on public health and prevention, and the importance of international engagement on these

areas. People living with underlying health conditions, such as cardiovascular disease, or with one or more risk factors for chronic disease, such as obesity, are at greater risk of severe illness and poorer health outcomes from COVID-19.

5. The United Kingdom and Australia will cooperate to further their shared public health objectives, including within the areas of addressing overweight, obesity and diet, tobacco control and alcohol. The objective of this cooperation is to create a strong framework to underpin existing work and to support greater collaboration, with the aim of establishing an enduring bilateral relationship to further shared priorities and advance public health on a global level.
6. Shared priorities for this cooperation will include policies and initiatives to:
  - (a) address health inequalities;
  - (b) address the prevalence of overweight and obesity and support people to achieve and maintain a healthy weight;
  - (c) continue to reduce tobacco use; and
  - (d) prevent and minimise alcohol-related harms.
7. The mechanisms for this cooperation may include:
  - (a) formal and informal exchanges of information, evidence and expertise;
  - (b) sharing research in support of measures of joint interest; and
  - (c) sharing details of good practice and lessons learned from public health policies, initiatives, and interventions.

As part of this, the United Kingdom and Australia will encourage and facilitate, where appropriate, the development of direct contacts between governmental health agencies, including at the regional level of government.<sup>1</sup>

8. This cooperation will offer opportunities for the United Kingdom and Australia to:
  - (a) establish links with a wide range of experts;
  - (b) initiate and benefit from bi-directional learning;
  - (c) explore ways to maximise common approaches;
  - (d) reduce duplication and improve efficiencies across areas of mutual interest; and
  - (e) build momentum to advance public health internationally,

which will ultimately support the United Kingdom and Australia in developing and implementing better public health policies.

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<sup>1</sup> Recognising that in the United Kingdom, public health and the provision of health services are the responsibility of the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland; and that in Australia, the Federal, State and Territory, and local governments share responsibility for operating the Australian health system.

I look forward to your letter in reply confirming that your Government shares this understanding.

Yours sincerely

**THE RT HONOURABLE ANNE-MARIE TREVELYAN MP**  
Secretary of State for International Trade  
& President of the Board of Trade