



Australian Government

Australian Trade and Investment Commission

# CORPORATE PLAN 2021-22



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# Statement of preparation

As Chief Executive Officer, and the accountable authority of the Australian Trade and Investment Commission, it gives me great pleasure to present the 2021–22 Austrade Corporate Plan. The Plan covers the four reporting periods to 30 June 2025, as required under paragraph 35(1) (b) of the (PGPA Act) and Part 7 of the *Australian Trade and Investment Commission Act 1985*.

## CEO's message

After 25 years working for international businesses, I am excited to be joining the public service as the CEO of Austrade. Austrade has a key role to play over the next four years as the Australian economy recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic. Our core mission is to help Australian businesses expand and strengthen their international engagement to create jobs, diversify their risk and drive economic growth. Geopolitical shifts have made this mission all the more important as Austrade assists Australian businesses navigate changes in the global market caused by these shifts.

The recent major drought, closely followed by devastating bushfires in 2019 and the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 have tested the resilience of our economy like never before. Geopolitical tensions, growing protectionism and nationalism and increased concerns about climate change are also contributing to a tough and uncertain trading environment.

Australia's prosperity, growth and standard of living rely heavily on international trade, investment, and the visitor economy. Over the last year, we have seen global Foreign Direct Investment decline by 46 per cent. For one of our largest sectors, the visitor economy, 2020 was a devastating year. We saw the international education sector drop by 22 per cent or \$8.8 billion in 2020 and we had significant falls in international visitor numbers and turnover.

This four year-plan contains Austrade's strategy to support Australian businesses to export, attract investment and develop our international education and tourism industries. As a delivery agency, we are deeply committed to delivering practical outcomes through innovative services and programs that assist our clients.

**Trade and investment:** we will strive to build a strong long-term trade and investment pipeline that will make the Australian economy more resilient and diversified. To support this, we will work with other Commonwealth Agencies to develop a single point of access to trade information for our clients through the Simplified Trade System (STS). The Export Market Development Grant (EMDG) program is also being reformed across 2021-22 to provide Australian business with a more responsive tool.

**Visitor economy:** Austrade will lead tourism policy and reimagine our future visitor economy strategy to develop and implement a ten-year re-imagining of the Visitor Economy 2030 framework and tourism recovery activities.

**International education:** despite serious challenges, Austrade is committed to continuing the promotion of international education, particularly through digital tools, to ensure foreign students continue to see Australia as an attractive destination and to restore their contribution to Australia's visitor economy.

**Emergency response to COVID-19:** Austrade continues to contribute to the national response to COVID-19. We have stood up to the challenge and defined and delivered emergency programs including the International Freight Assistance Mechanism, the Agri-Business Expansion Initiative and various grant initiatives. We will continue administering these programs as required in support of the Government's management of the pandemic.

Our ability to deliver and perform relies on continuous partnerships with other Australian public service departments and agencies, businesses, industries and peak bodies, states and territories. We thank them for their support and look forward to continuing to work together.



**Xavier Simonet**  
Chief Executive Officer

# Purpose

## To deliver quality trade and investment services to businesses to grow Australia's prosperity.

As the Australian Trade and Investment Commission—Austrade—we are responsible for promoting Australian trade, investment, tourism and education to the world. We contribute to Australia's economic prosperity by:

- assisting Australian business to connect to; expand with; and capitalise on opportunities in global markets
- attracting international investment that contributes to Australia's economic growth and innovation
- helping scale-ups innovate and go global
- assisting visitor economy industries with strategy, policy, and programs
- promoting Australia's leading-edge education services to the world.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact on Australia's economy. Austrade's purpose remains focused on growing our prosperity by supporting our clients to respond to the challenges posed by COVID-19 and its continued impact on the global economy. Our strategies to respond are set out in the following sections of the plan.

We also help Australian citizens by providing consular and passport services in designated overseas locations. For 2021–22, a particular focus of Austrade's consular activity will be assisting in the repatriation of Australians overseas who have been affected by COVID-19 related travel restrictions.

Australian businesses selling their products successfully overseas, and foreign investment that increases the productivity of the Australian economy, are both major contributors to Australia's prosperity. More exports and investment mean more profitable Australian businesses and more jobs.

# Operating Context

## Environment and economic outlook

### Introduction

Australian businesses faced major challenges during 2020. A major drought was followed by unprecedented bushfires. The COVID-19 pandemic shut international borders and dislocated trade and supply chains. Through these challenges, Austrade has delivered Australian Government initiatives which have assisted the Australian economy adapted to the COVID environment.

### Global backdrop

Ongoing strong demand for goods, boosted by extraordinary fiscal and monetary stimulus continues to support the global recovery. Vaccine rollouts proceeding at different rates are resulting in different speeds of recovery across countries, with ongoing activity restrictions in some countries weighing on activity near term. The US's extensive fiscal support and rapid vaccination rollout means it is expected to recover faster than other large, advanced economies. The International Monetary Fund expects advanced economies to expand by 5.1 per cent this year and 3.6 per cent in 2022 upgraded from January's forecasts of 4.3 per cent in 2021 and 3.1 per cent next year.

## **Australian outlook**

The Australian economy has bounced back aided by significant government investment. Low community transmission of COVID-19, unprecedented policy support and record high business confidence have fuelled the recovery. Employment has bounced back to pre-pandemic levels and the unemployment rate has fallen sharply from its peak in July 2020. Chinese trade barriers have significantly impacted on some exporters, but high global prices for iron ore and other resources such as copper have strongly offset this impact, resulting in record goods export values in recent years underpinning 40 consecutive months of trade surpluses.

## **Capability**

Austrade's capabilities fundamentally depend on the skills and experience of the people it employs, and its ability to share this capability through direct, as well as digital-based connections.

### **Developing our people**

In 2021, Austrade is co-designing a capability development approach with our partners and for our clients. Through this project, we will build Austrade's capability to become a centre of excellence for the delivery of trade and investment support services, allowing us to meet future demands as operating environment and client needs evolve. In addition, Austrade will take a lead role in building capability for trade and investment promotion agencies around the nation by co-designing and co-delivering relevant and consistent training to the State and Territories as well as Austrade staff. The demands on our staff to stand up new products and teams have underlined the need for flexibility in how we work. We will continue efforts to provide systems that support our staff as they move teams, change services, or the locations where they work.

Given Austrade's responsibilities and objectives, Austrade places particular emphasis on attracting high-quality, talented people, particularly from the corporate sector.

### **Expanding our digital capabilities**

As a global organisation, Austrade relies on knowledge and information systems to advance Australia's trade, investment, international education, and tourism interests. To be successful, it is critical that Austrade's information assets are available and accessible; any time, from any location, through a channel of choice, and for both clients and Austrade operations. As Austrade moves towards greater use of digital platforms to deliver personalised services, cost effectively and at scale, our IT and Digital capabilities take on increasing importance.

A key component of supporting Austrade's highly mobile workforce is ensuring seamless access to line-of-business applications and productivity tools that are resilient to change and disruption. Austrade has rolled out technologies to support an efficient, collaborative, and transparent work style, part of a broader strategy to digitise the workplace and move supporting applications to the cloud. This important step supports seamless interactions with clients, other government agencies, and stakeholders.

### **Security**

Ensuring the security of Austrade's critical assets – people, information, and reputation – given the dispersed and global nature of Austrade's operations, requires a robust yet adaptable approach. To this end, Austrade applies a risk-based security management framework that allows the agency to scale up and down where and when needed.

Enabling this approach Austrade works with DFAT, the Attorney General's Department, the Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC) and other agencies to ensure alignment with government security priorities and initiatives where practicable.

Austrade has strengthened its security capability principally through furthering integration of security risk management into broader business and corporate planning processes; providing staff with improved security awareness tools and guidance; and progressing key security infrastructure projects across the Austrade network.

## Risk oversight and management

Austrade recognises that Australia exists in a rapidly changing global environment. To work effectively within this environment, Austrade operates a risk management framework internally comprising a risk tolerance position, a risk assessment and management framework with seven key focus areas, and a risk reporting framework comprising corporate planning and reporting, supported oversight through the Audit and Risk Committee.

### Executive Oversight

As required by Section 16 of the PGPA Act and the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy, Austrade manages its exposure to risk, and takes actions to mitigate adverse consequences. This includes an annual Agency Risk Management Plan which identifies key strategic risks with the potential to affect Austrade's ability to achieve its objectives and priorities and establishes how these risks will be mitigated and managed. Austrade's Executive review these risks at least quarterly, or more regularly if required, to examine changes in the inherent environment and mitigation strategies. Austrade also considers how these factors impact on actual risk levels as well as new or emerging risks. Divisional and Operational risks are managed by senior managers but are escalated to the Executive and CEO for consideration if they are above the relevant risk appetite and tolerance level.

Austrade's Audit and Risk Committee provides independent advice to the CEO on the appropriateness of Austrade's financial reporting, performance reporting, system of risk oversight and management, systems of internal control, and other functions relevant to the Committee's operation.

### Key Agency Risks

Recognising that Austrade operates in a dynamic and evolving environment, Appendix A lists the key strategic risks at the time of writing this plan. However, these risks are regularly reviewed by the Executive for changes as well as to identify new or emerging risks.

# Key Activities

Table 1: Summary of Austrade’s purposes and activities

PURPOSE: To deliver quality trade and investment services to businesses to grow Australia’s prosperity			
 <p><b>Objective</b></p>	<p>Austrade contributes to Australia’s economic prosperity. We leverage the deep commercial knowledge and relationships of our international and domestic networks to deliver valued services to our clients. Our clients include exporters of Australian products and services, buyers or possible buyers of Australian products and services overseas, Australian visitor economy and tourism providers, and investors into Australia. Over the life of this plan, Austrade’s top priority will be to assist in the recovery of Australia’s economic prosperity from the COVID-19 pandemic and 2019–20 bushfires.</p>		
 <p><b>Outcome (from PBS)</b></p>	<p><b>Outcome 1</b>—Contribute to Australia’s economic prosperity by promoting Australia’s export and other international economic interests through the provision of information, advice and services to business, associations, institutions and government.</p>		
 <p><b>Focus areas / Policy Focus</b></p>	<p><b>Client services— Trade Facilitation</b></p>	<p><b>Client Services— Investment Attraction</b></p>	<p><b>Visitor Economy</b></p>
 <p><b>Develop and diversify Australia’s global market participation</b></p>	<p>Over the life of this four-year plan, Austrade will apply particular focus to developing policy responses and programs to help Australian exporters diversify and expand their markets in support of economic recovery and new economic growth.</p> <p>Our Excelerate program provides targeted high growth businesses with a dedicated client manager and the support of a global advisory team, to help them more quickly expand internationally.</p> <p>Under the Agri-Business Expansion Initiative, we will scale up our Excelerate services to help Australia’s food and agri-products businesses navigate global markets and expand overseas and/or diversify into new markets.</p> <p>We deliver personalised services cost effectively and at scale, through digital platforms and partners. These personalised digital services will allow exporting businesses to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assess and improve their export readiness</li> <li>• identify high-potential markets for their products or services</li> <li>• plan market entry/expansion - including through e-commerce</li> <li>• understand their regulatory and compliance obligations</li> <li>• gain access to in-market, high-value opportunities that will increase revenue and jobs.</li> </ul>	<p>Austrade will proactively target potential investors, promote Australia’s economic credentials, explain the market and regulatory environment, identify investment opportunities, and work with potential investors to develop business plans and facilitate their investment in Australia, particularly in Austrade’s priority investment markets of North America, Europe, North East Asia, Greater China and Singapore.</p>	<p>Under the Tourism Research Australia banner, we will deliver a range of statistics, research and analysis to support investment decisions, policy development and marketing for the Australian tourism industry.</p> <p>Austrade will lead visitor economy policy and recovery and work across industry and government and industry to provide input into domestic reforms that impact the Australian visitor economy, tourism industry and education sector to become more resilient, sustainable, and competitive.</p>





**Develop and diversify  
Australia's global  
market participation  
(continued)**

We will implement a nation brand. The new national brand will make it easier for Australia and Australian companies to attract international customers, investors, students and visitors.

We will lead the development of the Simplified Trade System to make trade simpler, easier and more efficient by reducing costs and red tape for our exporters.



**Support Australian  
business to manage  
through the COVID-19  
Pandemic**

Support Australian business to remain connected to global supply chains through:

- the International Freight Assistance Mechanism to help re-establish air links to allow Australian exporters to get their products to customers
- a reformed Export Market Development Grants scheme that provides greater certainty and simplifies the application process for exporters.

As part of Austrade's continued response to COVID-19, there will be an increasing focus on assisting investors already present in Australia and fostering reinvestment where possible.

Support the Visitor Economy and Tourism Sector to continue to pivot to domestic tourism and be ready for the return of international tourists through:

- Regional Tourism Bushfire Recovery Grants program to support economic returns in rural communities
- Zoos and aquariums to maintain their animals and attractions in anticipation of the return of international tourists
- Recovery of Regional Tourism program to encourage the return of visitors into regional centres
- COVID 19 Consumer Travel Support program to support travel agents to process refunds and support clients in readiness for the return of international travel.



**Support Australian's  
and Australian business  
operating offshore**

Utilise the national brand to make it easier for Australia and Australian companies to attract international customers, investors, students, and visitors.





**Objective**

Austrade helps Australian citizens overseas by providing consular and passport services in designated locations.



**Outcome (from PBS)**

**Outcome 2**—The protection and welfare of Australians abroad through timely and responsive consular and passport services in specific locations overseas.

**Consular and passport services**



**Focus areas**

Austrade delivers comprehensive, responsive, and high-quality consular services to Australian travellers and citizens living overseas, including notarial services and assistance with welfare issues, whereabouts enquiries, arrest or detention matters, deaths, and medical emergencies. During 2021–22, we will assist Australians overseas impacted by COVID-19 related travel restrictions to return to Australia to the extent permitted under the Australian Government Consular Services Charter.

We will deliver high-quality passport services to Australians, including processing new passport applications where possible under COVID-19 restrictions, registering lost or stolen passports, issuing emergency passports, and detecting passport fraud.

**Enabling Activities**

**Corporate Services**

# Performance

Austrade's performance planning underpins our strategy and operating environment, enabling us to fulfil our role of contributing to Australia's economic prosperity over the four-year life of this plan. It ensures Austrade provides maximum value to the taxpayer, as well as to Australian businesses, while working to the highest ethical standards. Austrade's planning process draws on several sources: the organisation's own **Strategy 2018–22**, the Portfolio Budget Statements, the *Australian Trade and Investment Commission Act 1985* and the *Public Governance Performance and Accountability Act 2013*. Our performance framework focuses on both quantity and quality. For each of our areas of responsibility (being Trade, Investment and Tourism/Education) we have developed indicators which measure:

- The volume of effort applied and outcomes achieved – in terms of trade outcomes, investment outcomes, freight routes maintained, processing speed for grants administration and the quality of Austrade's work comprising feedback from Austrade's clients via survey
- The value of Austrade's programs to its client groups through feedback on EMDG and accuracy and completeness of passport applications within timeframes
- The value and quality of Austrade's contribution to whole of government policy delivery and development.

**Table 2: Key Performance measures for Outcome 1**

**OUTCOME 1:** Contribute to Australia’s economic prosperity by promoting Australia’s export and other international economic interests through the provision of information, advice and services to business, associations, institutions and government

**ACTIVITY 1.1:** Client Services—Trade facilitation

This activity aims to support the Australian economy by building a more sustainable model of global economic participation for Australian businesses that can identify and adapt to new markets and emerging opportunities.

We will measure and report on our progress towards the results of the activity:

- Through the quality of Austrade’s services, advice and programs that help Australian businesses
- By supporting Australian businesses to maintain, diversify and grow their export trade outcomes.

Performance measure	TARGET				Source
	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	
High level of satisfaction for Austrade’s clients with Austrade’s services.	Austrade expects this level of satisfaction to reach at least 85 per cent, as measured in an annual survey.				Survey
Number of trade outcomes facilitated.	At least 500 outcomes.	At least 600 outcomes.	At least 700 outcomes.	At least 800 outcomes.	CRM from client notification
EMDG recipients report that the receipt of a grant encouraged them to increase their export promotion activities.	Austrade expects at least 70 per cent of EMDG recipients to report that receiving a grant encouraged them to increase their export promotion activities.				Survey
Maintain airfreight connections to top five agricultural/food export markets.	Top five destinations for agricultural / food export or distribution (e.g. China, Japan, USA, Middle East and Singapore) are serviced at least weekly by direct airfreight links from Australia.	Program to terminate in forward years.			Airservices Australia Australian Bureau of Statistics
Speed of processing of grants for the Supporting Exhibiting Zoos and Aquariums program.	90 per cent of funding agreements are issued within three weeks of receipt of application.	Program to terminate in forward years.			Internal records

### Activity 1.2: Client Services – Investment Attraction

This activity aims to proactively target potential investors and promote Australia’s economic credentials to facilitate their investment in Australia.

We will measure and report on our progress towards the results of the activity:

- Through attraction of foreign direct investment into Australia
- By supporting growth in the priority sectors of the Australian economy.

Performance measure	TARGET				Source
	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
The number and value of investment outcomes facilitated, measured in terms of investment value, jobs created/retained and anticipated annual exports.	Austrade expects to facilitate at least 80 investment outcomes.	Austrade expects to facilitate at least 100 investment outcomes.	Austrade expects to facilitate at least 110 investment outcomes.	Austrade expects to facilitate at least 120 investment outcomes.	CRM from investor notification

### Activity 1.3: Policy

This activity aims to use Austrade’s global and commercial perspectives on trade and investment issues to contribute to policy advice to Government. Areas of current focus are tourism and education.

We will measure and report on our progress towards the results of the activity:

- By using trade and investment insights to advocate in policy debates and decisions that impact Austrade’s clients, its exporters and the investment community
- Through the influence and delivery across Government of programs and the reform of the visitor economy.

Performance measure	TARGET				Source
	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
Effective contribution to whole-of-government policy development including using Austrade’s commercial insights.	Areas of focus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trade diversification</li> <li>• COVID-19 recovery</li> <li>• Simplified Trade System</li> <li>• Visitor Economy.</li> </ul>	Focus areas to be determined before beginning of each year.			Internal assessment; case studies where appropriate

**Table 3: Key Performance measures for Outcome 2**

<b>Outcome 2: The protection and welfare of Australians abroad through timely and responsive consular and passport services in specific locations overseas</b>					
<b>Activity 2.1: Consular and passport services</b>					
This activity aims to ensure that Austrade provides consular and passport services in designated locations where the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade does not have a presence.					
We will measure and report on our progress towards the results of the activity:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By delivering to Australians who are travelling and/or working overseas effective consular and efficient passport services.</li> </ul>					
Performance measure	TARGET				Source
	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
Effective delivery of consular and passport services to Australians overseas.	97 per cent of routine passport applications are processed accurately as per Australian Passport Office benchmark.				DFAT passport and Consular Information System databases

# Appendix A: Key Agency Risks

## Enterprise risk framework

Robust risk management ensures that Austrade is able to respond effectively and with agility to challenges both in Australia, and internationally, to support Australian business and investors. Risk management is an integral part of Austrade's operation and is embedded in our policies, processes, and systems.

Our Enterprise Risk Management Framework and Policy are in line with the expectations of the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy.

Austrade regularly reviews its Risk Management Framework to ensure it is fit for purpose and accurately reflects our strategic and operating challenges. Key agency risks are all underpinned by comprehensive risk management plans that are regularly reviewed and updated as required. Austrade also has an Audit and Risk Committee which delivers independent assurance to the CEO and helps to ensure Austrade's risk management is appropriate.

## Managing our strategic risks

### The key enterprise risks are:

- Austrade service strategies, and policy advice do not align with the needs or expectations of Australian businesses, international investors, Government, key stakeholders and Australian citizens
- Austrade fails to, in a timely way, align resources and staff capabilities to support strategic priorities and key deliverables
- Austrade's management of operations including governance, business continuity, planning, risk management, fiscal management and staff capability is not fit for purpose
- Austrade does not balance the use of digital tools, appropriately manage personal and Government information whilst meeting mandatory government cyber security or information management requirements
- Austrade's operations and activities do not meet legal and regulatory obligations or standards
- Austrade's internal culture and behaviour do not align with organisational values, foster ethical behaviour, or support the attraction and retention of suitably skilled staff
- Austrade fails to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of staff, contractors, those requiring Consular assistance or other visitors to our offices.

### Mitigation strategies:

- Ongoing oversight by the CEO and Executive Committee
- Regular financial and performance reporting
- Application of risk management, auditing, and reviews
- Close engagement with our clients and stakeholders to support the design and delivery of services
- Effective Governance, Security, WHS, Capability and Leadership frameworks, with policies and procedures that support the delivery of operations and compliance with legislative and administrative requirements
- Building a positive work culture through APS Values, Code of Conduct and Austrade Values.

# Appendix B: List of requirements

Required section under subsection 16E(2) of the PGPA Rule	Page
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