



TRADE FOR ALL ADVISORY BOARD

CHAIR'S REPORT: MEETING 1

The Trade for All Advisory Board (TFAAB) held its initial meeting in Wellington on Wednesday 12 December 2018.

Presentations

The TFAAB was welcomed by the Minister for Trade and Export Growth, Hon David Parker, who thanked the members for making themselves available. He explained the challenges of the current international environment for trade negotiations, including to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) from new tariff measures being introduced by some members as well as the blockage to the appointment of WTO Appellate Members. The Minister made clear that it was for the TFAAB to shape its own agenda while respecting the boundaries of trade policy and its relationships to other areas of economic, social and environmental policy. He encouraged the TFAAB to draw on relevant expertise inside and outside of Government.

The TFAAB received a presentation on Maori interests in international trade agreements. It heard that this has been examined in depth by the Waitangi Tribunal in its "Report on the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement", WAI 2522, and that this report would be highly relevant to the work of the TFAAB.

The TFAAB received a second presentation, on diverse thinking. This emphasised that the best outcomes require expression of diverse thoughts. Suggestions were made on how the TFAAB could act in ways that are conducive to diverse thinking.

Working Methods

After the initial presentations the members of the Board broke into working groups to discuss the Principles for Trade for All that Cabinet had issued and the Terms of Reference for the TFAAB. The working groups also discussed structure and working methods as well as sharing initial thoughts on the subject matter that the TFAAB's report will focus on.

Terms of Reference and Principles

There was agreement that the Cabinet Principles and Terms of Reference provided a solid basis for the work of the TFAAB. They are to be finalised after the second meeting. In the interests of transparency the current draft of the Terms of Reference will be put on the website.

Focus of the Board

The TFAAB has one purpose. It is to produce an independent report to the Minister for Trade and Export Growth with practical and implementable recommendations on how to make trade policy work better for all New Zealanders.



Given the short time frame to produce the report, the complexity of the subject matter and the diverse range of views represented, it was agreed that it would be impractical for the Board to try to act as a drafting committee. The focus on the Board will be to:

- agree at a high level the principles that should inform New Zealand trade policy;
- agree on which subjects will need to be examined in more depth;
- create small working groups to draft analysis and recommendations on these subjects for the Board to consider;
- monitor the progress of the working groups and finalise the report.

It was agreed that, as a first step, the Board would produce a draft table of contents for its report. This will be discussed at its next meeting.

Transparency

Given the need to balance public interest in the TFAAB's work, with the desirability of promoting a free and frank exchange of views, the TFAAB agreed to three principles on transparency:

- 1 The Chair will produce a brief summary report of all of its meetings which will be published on the TFAAB's website;
- 2 The TFAAB will apply the Chatham House rule, under which participants may discuss what is said at meetings but not attribute comments or positions to individuals;
- 3 Board members would consult with their respective networks about the work of the TFAAB in a responsible way that was respectful both of the process and their fellow TFAAB members.

It was also agreed that the TFAAB should be outward facing and innovative in the way it engages with interested New Zealanders. This will include hearing from groups and individuals who have made submissions to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's 'Trade for All' website.

Subject Matter

A wide range of subjects was proposed by the working groups. It was agreed that the best method for agreeing and structuring which subjects the TFAAB would focus on would be by producing the draft Table of Contents for its report.

Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next TFAAB meeting would be in February. The main focus of that meeting will be to produce the draft table of contents which will set out the subject matter that the TFAAB agrees should be examined in detail.

David Pine
Chair

Trade for All Advisory Board