

Dear Simplified Trading System Implementation Taskforce,

The Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC) is the peak industry body representing 2,000 post-farm gate red meat businesses. AMIC members include meat processors, smallgoods manufacturers, boning rooms, cold stores, wholesalers and distributors, through to exporters and independent retail butchers.

The Australian meat supply chain makes a substantial contribution to the national economy each year, accounting for over \$13.5 billion in value-add and \$67.7 billion in industry turnover in 2020-21.¹ A large proportion of this value is generated through exports, with meat and offal exports valued at \$16.1 billion in 2021-22.

Because of the importance of trade to our industry, AMIC welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Simplified Trading System (STS) Consultation Paper 2023 (the Paper) and commends the Federal Government's efforts to create a simpler and more effective cross-border trade environment for Australian exporters.

As a general response to the Paper, AMIC supports the STS, its aims, and its proposed activities including the six areas of reform that are highlighted. There are several improvements that can be made across regulatory, digital and data reform, that would create a less burdensome experience for Australian meat and meat product exporters, as well as meat importers. Noting the time sensitivity associated with trading perishable products and our industry's reliance on trade, we are a sector that will significantly benefit from improvements in cross-border processes and system efficiency. Reforms and the streamlining of processes in this area are of great importance and interest to the members of AMIC.

In addition to supporting the highlighted areas of improvement in the Paper, AMIC would like to draw the Taskforce's attention to a few specific items that are of high importance to the export meat industry.

Firstly, AMIC would like to emphasise the importance of collaboration throughout this process. Noting the cross-cutting nature of cross-border regulations and identified areas for improvement, the Paper correctly notes that collaboration between government agencies and regulators is needed to deliver holistic reforms.

AMIC's concern is that relevant agencies contribution to STS outcomes occurs independently - missing opportunities to streamline and embed new systems or approaches that are not interconnected, undermining the goals of the overall project. This is particularly the case between government departments involved in the export documentation process to ensure that duplicative and unnecessarily burdensome processes required for export are eliminated to the extent possible.

Additionally, while AMIC notes the importance of innovation and new approaches to the work of the STS, we also highlight the importance of learning from previous mistakes. In a context of increased government and industry staff mobility, corporate knowledge is not as deep as previously

¹ MLA (2022). *State of the Industry Report: 2022*. https://www.mla.com.au/globalassets/mla-corporate/prices--markets/documents/trends--analysis/soti-report/2879-mla-state-of-industry-report-2022_d6_low-res_spreads.pdf

experienced. This had led to examples of 'reinventing the wheel' or replicating previous mistakes which have resulted in wasted resources. To manage this risk in the work of the STS, AMIC strongly suggests that corporate knowledge of industry is leveraged through very close consultation throughout all reform design and implementation. Strong consultation and collaboration with industry will help to ensure that the commercial realities of trade, and the areas that are most required for improvement, are known and addressed and previous experienced learned from.

Finally, AMIC seeks assurance from the Federal Government that the STS Taskforce will receive long term, ongoing financial and staff resourcing required to ensure the program is able to be carried out and ambitions goals are able to be met. With Australia now securing free trade agreements with the majority of our largest trading partners, the STS stands as one of the most significant areas that government can invest in to drive international competitiveness and support the Australian meat industry.

The STS has major potential benefits for all traders and the Australian economy. This is particularly true for the meat industry given our role as exporters and importers of perishable products and being a trade-focused sector. As such, AMIC stands ready to assist the STS Implementation Taskforce with the rollout of this important reform.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Hutchinson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Patrick Hutchinson

Chief Executive Officer

Australian Meat Industry Council

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