

Rail Industry welcomes agreement on Australia-UK Free Trade Deal

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The Railway Industry Association, and a number of its members, have welcomed the signing today of [an Agreement in Principle between the Australian and UK Governments](#), paving the way for a Free Trade Agreement.

Darren Caplan, Chief Executive of the Railway Industry Association (RIA), commented: “The UK has long had a close relationship with the Australian railway sector, and it remains as a top priority market for rail suppliers.

“Many UK rail businesses are already winning work in Australia and a free trade agreement between the UK and Australia offers even greater opportunities. It should mean more access to government contracts and mutual recognition of professional qualifications, and also allow UK professionals to work in Australia more easily.

“So we look forward to the UK railway industry working closely with the Department for International Trade, to make the most of these opportunities and boost trade with new partners around the world.”

A number of RIA Members have also welcomed the Agreement.

Craig Harvey, British Steel Commercial Director Rail, said: "Railway operators in Australia currently face an unnecessary 5% import tax. The Australian rail market's annual spend on rails and sleepers will be in the hundreds of millions of dollars, so an FTA that would remove that 5% tax would create a substantial saving for the industry."

"An FTA would also allow British Steel to be more competitive in a market that is crucial to the Australian economy, enabling us to support population growth and resultant freight and passenger movements."

Justin Moss, Head of Sales Electrification for Siemens Mobility, said: "Siemens Mobility Electrification is based across the UK, including in Lincolnshire, and manufacture products for local rail applications, such as air insulated 25kv switchboards. To date it has not been successful in winning work in Australia via the UK but it is now actively discussing export opportunities for key products and hoping a reciprocal FTA could support that."

"The products we manufacture in the UK have similar standards and requirements to Australia making export a logical next step. The removal of up to 5% tariffs on these products through an FTA will increase the competitiveness of UK manufactured goods, supporting UK jobs and skills investment."

Andrew Foulkes, Global Marketing Lead at Ricardo Rail, said: "Approximately 25% of our rail sector revenue derives from Australia and we expect this to grow as we look to take advantage of its burgeoning domestic market. A UK-Australia FTA which supports the movement of skilled workers between the UK and Australia will help us transfer skills and knowledge between our UK and Australia teams."

Rita Mascia, Altro's Global Bid Manager - Rail, said: "A favourable FTA will ensure Altro continue to be a competitive player within the Australian marketplace, as one of the biggest challenges for us comes from competition from European countries manufacturers who have EU negotiated agreements. Even a small decrease in tariffs would enable us to compete on quality instead of on price. An increase in our rail business will contribute to the growth of our Australian subsidiary of Altro and generate additional employment. Finally, our Australian business is also strategically important in supporting our route to market in South East Asian countries. Favourable FTA gains in Australia will also benefit our growth in the Asia Pacific region."

Adam Elliott, Rail Project Engineer at Hird Rail Development, said: "A free trade agreement that would result in a reduction in duty costs would make our products a lot more attractive to Australian customers from a cost perspective. As well as generating key jobs within our distributors organisation, with offices based in Sydney and Brisbane."

Kirsty Dias, Managing Director of PriestmanGoode, said: "A Free Trade Agreement would mean that we could bring our expertise and design skills in both rail and parallel industries to Australia. To work alongside transit providers and local suppliers to create a future rail and transport system across Australia that provides a world 'best in class' travel experience as well as building local specialist knowledge and bringing employment through collaboration."

Photo credit: Railway Industry Association