

Meeting Notes

1st AusPECC Advisory Board Meeting for 2026

Meeting Details

Date	14 April 2026
Time	2:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Location	Virtual – hybrid (RMIT Asia Hub, Building 8, Level 2, 368–374 Swanston St, Melbourne VIC 3000)
Chair	Stuart Fuller

Attendees

- Stuart Fuller – AusPECC Advisory Board Chair, Chair, Asia Society Australia
- Craig Emerson – Executive Chair, Australian APEC Study Centre
- Christopher Findlay AM – Honorary Professor, Crawford School of Public Policy, ANU
- Christopher Langman – Immediate Past Chair, AusPECC
- Grace Gown – Head of Global Public Policy, Xero
- Liandra Gaykamangu – Founder & CEO, Liandra Swim
- Jane Drake-Brockman – Senior Visiting Fellow, Institute for International Trade / Executive Director, Australian Services Roundtable
- Jon Berry – Geopolitics Lead, KPMG South ASPAC
- Prudence Gordon – Founder & Executive Director, Australian Centre for International Trade and Investment (ACITI)
- Sophia Hamblin Wang – Co-founder & COO, Mineral Carbon International
- Arjuna Nadaraja – AusPECC Chair
- Kristen Bondietti – Principal Advisor, Australian APEC Study Centre / AusPECC Vice-Chair
- Bonnie Rivendell – Director, Asia Hub
- Timothy Lawler – Policy and Research Advisor, Australian APEC Study Centre

Apologies

- Shiro Armstrong – Director, Australia-Japan Research Centre, ANU Crawford School of Public Policy

Discussion Notes

Role and purpose

AusPECC plays a unique ‘tripartite’ role in bringing together experts from think-tanks and universities, business and government to support strategic thinking and practical action, particularly channelled through APEC, that deepens economic cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region.

Through the regional organisation, the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC), which is an active and highly-respected advisory body to APEC, AusPECC provides an influential voice to governments at the Asia-Pacific level as well as the Australian government. Given the current economic challenges facing the region it was noted that the co-chairs of PECC coming from China and the United States working collaboratively was a valuable asset for an economic cooperation body that was unique for the region.

The role of the Advisory Board is to advise AusPECC in its strategic thinking, formulating practical work programs, responding to PECC projects and building trade and economic stakeholder networks.

2026 AusPECC priorities and projects

AusPECC has two key priorities for 2026:

- To add value — bring new ideas and practical solutions into the Australian, PECC and APEC community on how to address the challenges we face.
- To expand awareness of AusPECC and PECC’s work beyond its existing “bubble,” focusing on what will make a practical difference for business.

2026 AusPECC projects

AusPECC’s current and recent projects include:

- PECC Signature Project on advancing the Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific (FTAAP) – provides a vehicle to advance ideas and actions to address challenges facing business in the region, through collaboration on ‘pathfinder’ initiatives (voluntary participation to progress projects with expectation that others will join when ready) with ‘like minded’ partners.
- National Foundation for Australia China Relations (NFACR) funded grant, supporting bilateral cooperation with China on advancing the Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific (FTAAP), including an AusPECC hosted dialogue to be held in Melbourne in August.
- A joint project with Canada’s national PECC Committee that proposed recommendations to government on how to update the e-commerce provisions of the Comprehensive Progressive Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (CPTPP) to better accommodate fundamental changes in the digital economy.

Member views

There are several key “pain points” for business operating in the region:

Uncertainty

- There is huge uncertainty for business since Trump; the WTO in trouble; many countries are walking away from trade commitments and the rules-based order
- The international geopolitical environment is making local regulation unpredictable, and more closely aligned with national security interests and critical industries

Domestic regulation

- Onerous and/or diverging domestic regulation (regulatory disconnect) in trading partners is impacting on business, including for example, tax regulation, e-payments/invoicing AI regulation, digital standards
- This is a particular issue in the services sector, creating barriers to digital services trade. Fragmentation is worsening with geopolitical developments (as per above).
- Traditional trade barriers still matter across business and borders: non-tariff measures such as labelling standards and tariffs impact on business operations.
- Closer a connection that a sector has to national security, more regulatory interference there will be (eg: energy sovereignty)

Climate inaction

- Climate transition is an important and ongoing issue but is being overlooked as multiple competing calamities push climate action further down the list of priorities
- Climate inaction will exacerbate other economies priorities and contribute to crumbling of social cohesion. Increase of misinformation is a key concern. Domestic reforms/actions are key

Standards and intellectual property

- Consistent standards and frameworks to maintain consumer confidence and protect products and services is crucial
 - lack of a consistent framework to protect indigenous IP/products is an issue

Where AusPECC can play a role

In the current environment, collaboration with like-minded partners is key: APEC pathfinder initiatives and subgroups offer an opportunity to do something. FTAAP can be an umbrella framework to articulate ideas and propose actions.

Areas for consideration to be taken forward include:

- **Business innovation** – PECC can help articulate pathways for commercialisation and scaling up, particularly in areas of decarbonisation and climate technology where building confidence and government support in long term interests is needed.
 - better facilitation of commercialisation pathways is critical – government support to cross the ‘valley of death’ is important
- **The ‘liberalisation project’ and international obligations** – PECC agenda was good for the pre-Trump era. We now need a new agenda – what are countries doing to deal with uncertainty; which countries are walking back from international obligations?
 - international obligations continue to deliver outcomes, but must also meet challenges, noting that climate is a key issue

- look at domestic agendas and pick hot topics to use for outreach to broader community
- increasing Australia's understanding of the region is critical.
- **Services** - It would be valuable to have a new story about services, such as the complementarity between services and manufacturing, to better support frameworks needed across various industries for the entrepreneurial ecosystem
- **Digital** - A key issue is how to encourage conversations on domestic regulation that advance digital transformation and foster international standards alignment across borders
- **Inclusion** - PECC can help to keep work on women's inclusion, First Nations trade, digital and financial inclusion on the economic agenda, which has been halted due to competing "calamities".
- **Labour mobility** - Mobility, including mobility of professionals, visa and immigration issues are important in the context of the changing nature of services, professional services, skills and workforce needs.

Advocacy and facilitating broader input to PECC and APEC proposals

- What can be done to improve and broaden the business/public awareness of AusPECC? AusPECC needs to tell a story that makes a difference to intended audience: government, people on the street.
- Implement system of two-way communication between Australian economic/trade stakeholders and PECC-APEC so that PECC-APEC initiatives and proposals can be better informed by Australian community and vice versa.