



October 2020

## Inaugural meeting of the new Advisory Board of the Australian APEC Study Centre

Last week, the Australian APEC Study Centre (AASC) hosted the inaugural meeting of its new Advisory Board under the leadership of the recently appointed Chair, Professor Ross Garnaut AC.

The Board announced its newest members: Dr Gordon de Brouwer, Chair of the Australian Committee of the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (AusPECC) and Julianne Merriman, APEC Senior Official and Assistant Secretary of the Multilateral Economic Branch at the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Gordon and Julianne join a team of distinguished economic advisers: Professor Garnaut; Dr Craig Emerson, Director of the AASC; Amy Auster, Chief Adviser at the Commonwealth Treasury; Joanna Hewitt AO, Australia's representative on the APEC Vision Group; Professor Marian Baird AO, Professor of Gender and Employment Relations at the University of Sydney; Robert Milliner, Australian representative on the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC); and Lisa Barker, ABAC Australia Lead Staffer.

The full bios of the Centre's Advisory Board Members can be found [here](#).

As Chair, Professor Garnaut noted the array of experience and expertise Advisory Board Members offer and the value the Board will provide when advising on the Centre's activities. The meeting discussed themes of geopolitical challenges, US-China tensions, the critical importance of championing the multilateral trading system, and the opportunities and challenges presented by globalisation.

The Board expressed concern about the damage the COVID-19 pandemic has inflicted on developing economies in particular.

Professor Garnaut highlighted the importance of organisations such as APEC continuing to support the multilateral trading system. "The existence of APEC has encouraged the openness of the region and trust in mutual benefit across the Asia Pacific. The retreat from openness will make the region poorer. We must rebuild and



continue with analysis, sharing of knowledge and communication through regional cooperation. APEC has done this before and is equipped to do it again now. APEC is about people to people, business to business, expert to expert relationships and the encouragement of incremental change.”

The wide-ranging discussion among Board members of these challenges will inform the Australian APEC Study Centre’s strategy for 2021, with the Chair concluding the meeting by reiterating the importance of continuing discussions on the benefits of open trade and investment and deeper integration to build confidence across the Asia Pacific region, “We need to start talking again about how much we have to gain from openness of trade.”