



# International Trade Committee

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Rt Hon Mark Spencer MP  
Leader of the House of Commons  
Cabinet Office  
70 Whitehall  
London  
SW1A 2AS

6 July 2022

Dear Mark,

As you may know, we recently published a report on our scrutiny of the UK-Australia free trade agreement (FTA).<sup>1</sup> In our report we called for a debate on the FTA,<sup>2</sup> in addition to seeking an extension of the statutory 'CRaG' parliamentary scrutiny period,<sup>3</sup> and asked the Secretary of State to respond urgently on this.<sup>4</sup>

Last week, the Secretary of State said she would respond in evidence to us today.<sup>5</sup> However, in the session, she told us that she couldn't provide the answer as she was waiting for Business Managers to make the decision about the debate.

Additionally, in her appearance before the Committee this afternoon, the Secretary of State repeatedly referred to a general debate. We have explicitly called for a debate on a substantive motion if the Government does not agree to extend the statutory 'CRaG' parliamentary scrutiny period.<sup>6</sup>

As the Secretary of State confirmed that the Government is not going to extend the CRaG period, and said the decision about the debate was for Business Managers, I am writing to urgently request that you confirm:

1. that the Government meet our request for a debate between 13 and 19 July;
2. when the debate be; and
3. that the debate will be on the substantive motion requested.

You will be aware that the CRaG period is currently due to expire on 20 July, and obviously Members need time to prepare for the debate, so please can you respond by the end of tomorrow, Thursday 7 July.

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<sup>1</sup> International Trade Committee, First Report of Session 2022–23, [UK trade negotiations: Scrutiny of Agreement with Australia](#), HC444

<sup>2</sup> International Trade Committee, First Report of Session 2022–23, [UK trade negotiations: Scrutiny of Agreement with Australia](#), HC444, para 23

<sup>3</sup> International Trade Committee, First Report of Session 2022–23, [UK trade negotiations: Scrutiny of Agreement with Australia](#), HC444, para 25

<sup>4</sup> International Trade Committee, First Report of Session 2022–23, [UK trade negotiations: Scrutiny of Agreement with Australia](#), HC444, para 27

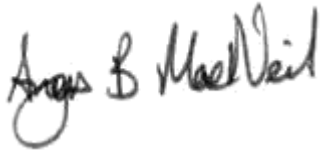
<sup>5</sup> [Correspondence from the Secretary of State relating to the scrutiny period for the UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement, dated 1 July 2022](#)

<sup>6</sup> International Trade Committee, First Report of Session 2022–23, [UK trade negotiations: Scrutiny of Agreement with Australia](#), HC444, para 25

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for International Trade. I am also copying it to the Chairs of the Liaison Committee, the International Agreements Committee, the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, and the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee, given their related interest. I am additionally copying this letter to the Prime Minister and Mr Speaker.

In accordance with our usual practice, this letter, along with any replies, will be published on the Committee's webpage.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Angus B MacNeil". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Angus Brendan MacNeil  
Chair of the International Trade Committee