Australia's Role in Global Innovation

German-Australian Chamber of Industry and Commerce (AHK)

www.germany.org.au

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Dear Members & Friends,

Welcome to the first issue of the German-Australian Business News for 2019. I trust you had a wonderful Christmas and New Year’s.

Brexit has been a topical flashpoint across Europe and the world since the United Kingdom voted to leave the bloc on 23 June 2016. In this issue we cover the possible consequences to business across Australia and Germany, and what Brexit may mean to your business both nationally and abroad.

A wide range of articles from the DIHK Brussels office, Australian Institute of International Affairs, the Victorian State Government, the Queensland University of Technology alongside Member-insights are focussing on how the recent development might affect the wider economy – not just in Europe but on a global scale. For example Thomas Hansen, Regional Director of Röhlig Australia and New Zealand explains, in an in-depth interview, how disruption from Brexit could shake up the entire industry, bringing uncertainties for regional operators as well as offering scope for innovation and growth.

We have also been in touch with our colleagues from the German-British Chamber of Industry & Commerce in the UK, who have been kind enough to provide us with an article for our ‘The View Abroad’ section. Director-General Dr Ulrich Hoppe outlines, among other things, how businesses have been unable to make concrete plans for the future and how the resulting wait-and-see attitude has led to some investment being put on hold.

Our policy update will also give a summary of the impact of Brexit on businesses in Australia and the Free Trade Agreement developments between Australia and the EU as well as between Australia and the UK. It also provides an in-depth update of the latest developments in the Australia–EU Free Trade Agreement negotiations from discussions in Brussels.

At the moment there are multiple possible Brexit outcomes, as the uncertainty about whether and how Brexit will take place continues. Companies need to get ready for different scenarios, and we hope that you will find the various articles of this issue helpful for your individual preparation. Nevertheless please keep in mind, that our magazine was produced in early January 2019 and there might be current developments that couldn’t be considered, by the time this issue went into print.

Thank you again for your support over the last year and I wish you a successful start into 2019.

Kind regards,

Alexandra Voss
Executive Director
German-Australian Chamber of Industry and Commerce

UPCOMING EVENTS

Events range from workshops & seminars to roundtable discussions, receptions, to large-scale conferences. Some events are open to the public, while others are only accessible for members. Our speakers include top-level industry experts, leading government representatives and inspiring thought leaders.

06 Feb
Young Executive Forum, Sydney

07 Feb
Exclusive Roundtable with Bill Shorten/Senior Advisers, Melbourne

07 Feb
Young Executive Forum, Melbourne

15 Feb
Lunch Forum: Economic Outlook 2019 with Paul Bloxham, Melbourne

28 Feb
New Year’s Reception 2019, Brisbane

07 Mar
New Year’s Reception 2019, Sydney

08 Mar
International Women’s Day Forum and High Tea 2019, Melbourne

29 Mar
4th Annual German-Australian Chamber and Qatar Airways Sailing Regatta, Sydney

If you are interested in one or more events please contact:

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Policy Update on Trade and Investment

Trade Agreement negotiations between Australia and the European Union are on track and the German–Australian Chamber continues to argue key issues for its members.

The formal negotiations for the Australia–EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA) are progressing well. The second round of negotiations took place in Canberra in the middle of November. Thank you to our Board member Bernd Portugall who attended the FTA briefing by the two chief negotiators, Ms Alison Burrows (Australia) and Ms Helena König (European Union), on behalf of the Chamber. It became clear that both sides are willing to reach a comprehensive agreement that addresses both tariff and non-tariff trade barriers and that achieves a high utilisation rate, including by small to medium-sized businesses (SMEs). Both chief negotiators are highly experienced and understand the key issues on both sides. FTA negotiations require compromises from both sides, but they also require a clear willingness to remove trade and investment barriers, and we have every indication that both sides have the necessary willingness. We have been able to raise the key areas of opportunities for the German–Australian business community several times with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

I had the pleasure to be in Brussels to manage the EU-Australia Leadership Forum from 18–22 November together with the other members of the project team. This project, financed by the European Union and supported by DFAT, aims to broaden and deepen the existing ties between the EU and Australia in all key areas, including trade and investment. Outstanding experts such as European Commissioner for Trade Dr Cecelia Malmström attended the Forum and provided further insights into the current European trade agenda and Australia’s priorities. Beside some detailed discussions around trade issues for services, geographical indicators and Industry 4.0 opportunities, the Forum also emphasised that Europe and Australia share so many common values, including a commitment to a rules-based trading order and therefore the Australia-EU FTA also of symbolic value to demonstrate those common values.

In Brussels, I also used the opportunity to speak with the local experts from our global head organisation, the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Deutscher Industrie- und Handelskammertag, DIHK). We were able to update each other about key European and Australian developments that impact the FTA negotiations such as the upcoming European Parliament election and the political developments in Australia.

However, all my Brussels discussions made it clear that a fundamental topic in the future relationship, will be Brexit, due to its various potential impacts. In regards to Brexit, the terms of the separation of the United Kingdom from the EU matter enormously. Will it be a hard Brexit or what are the details of the UK-EU agreement?

What seems to be clear is that while the UK and Australia envision a UK-Australia FTA and this could provide benefits to companies active in both markets, the Australia-EU FTA is significantly more advanced by having already concluded the second round of formal negotiations and with the EU offering Australia the considerably larger market potential.

The Chamber will continue its engagement with its members and relevant external stakeholders to understand key FTA issues and to raise areas of importance or concern. Removing tariff and non-tariff trade and investment barriers will be a priority to achieve the full potential of the Australia-EU and particularly the Australia-Germany economic relationship. This includes rules and procedures that make it easier for SMEs such as the German Mittelstand to benefit from the arrangement, both on the product side for example by recognition of European standards and on the human resources side by recognising skills and making skills transfers easy.

I expect a slight impact on the FTA negotiations through the upcoming elections for the European Parliament in May 2019 and the Australian Federal election scheduled for the first half of 2019.

Stay tuned for more updates on the website about the latest developments around trade and investment developments. As with all our policy projects, please feel free to get in touch if you want to discuss them, or want to get involved.

Written by Dr Michael Zettinig, German-Australian Chamber

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The Chamber organised its second Canberra Delegation on 16 and 17 October.

The small delegation group had a more focused program to deepen the bilateral relationship and to discuss current bilateral developments and opportunities with key political stakeholders.

We were delighted that Her Excellency Dr Anna Prinz, German Ambassador to Australia and Patron of the German-Australian Chamber, was able to join us for most of the discussions. In line with our practice, we again engaged both relevant government Ministers and Senators as well as Shadow Ministers to foster bipartisan support for the Australia-Germany relationship.

The single most important topic at the moment is the negotiation process for the Australia-EU Free Trade Agreement. The Chamber supports a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement that removes both tariff and non-tariff trade barriers in the bilateral relationship. This will lead to more trade in goods and services, more bilateral investments and increased employment as outlined in the EU impact study for the agreement. We discussed various aspects of the agreement with our dialogue partners, including the recognition of standards, government procurement, intra-company visas, the luxury car tax and how to make the agreement usable for small-to-medium enterprises like the German Mittelstand or innovative medium-sized Australian companies. Other topics such as the defence industry, Industry 4.0 and energy were also deliberated.

We want to thank our discussion partners Senator the Hon Mathias Cormann, Minister for Finance and the Public Service and Leader of the Government in the Senate, Steven Ciobo, Minister for Defence Industry, The Office of Trade and Investment Minister Simon Birmingham, the senior advisors of the Hon Bill Shorten MP, Shadow Minister the Hon Jason Clare MP, Shadow Minister the Hon Mark Butler MP, Shadow Minister the Hon Richard Marles MP, Senator the Hon Eric Abetz as well as Cornelis Keijzer and his team at the EU Delegation to Australia. We continued our close engagement with relevant bilateral political stakeholders during our Australian Delegation to the 16th Asia-Pacific Conference of German Business (APK) in Jakarta chaired by Minister Mathias Cormann. (Detailed report on page 10.)

Written by Dr Michael Zettinig, German-Australian Chamber
5th Annual German Chamber & Allianz Golf Day

On 29 October, we hosted our 5th German-Australian Chamber & Allianz Golf Day at the beautiful Huntingdale Golf Course. For the first time in five years, our attendees were greeted with blue skies and not a single cloud to be seen.

With 15 groups competing in this year’s tournament, the event was well attended by our sponsors and members. After everyone had registered, enjoyed a light lunch and had a practice swing with their team members, our players were greeted by Tina Thoms, Manager Melbourne Branch and Membership Director of the Chamber, and our special guest the Hon Philip Dalidakis MLC, Minister for Trade and Investment, Innovation and the Digital Economy and Small Business who was delighted to be able to spend the day combining work and pleasure.

Once everyone got in the group picture, it was already time for all teams to find their starting holes for the 1pm shotgun tee-off!

To keep energy levels high for all the different competitions, Gary from Huntingdale, together with Julia and Caroline, made sure that our golfers were well hydrated and fed with sugary snacks, driving around the Huntingdale Golf Club in the Beverage Cart kindly sponsored by Hophaus.

Despite the beautiful weather and our attempt to keep energy levels high by giving away more than 90 chocolate bars, not all players seemed to be ‘on top of their game’: Hole number 12 featured a “Beat the Pro” competition where our amateurs had a chance to challenge a professional golfer during the tournament. However, golf pro Lisa could not be beaten by any of the players and so the prize went to Ian Stewart who delivered the best shot according to Lisa.

After 4½ hours on the greens, the teams went back to the beautiful clubhouse for pre-dinner drinks before our hungry players made their way to the dining room to enjoy a delicious three-course dinner and to review the successful day.

Some great prizes were made available to the winners thanks to our Platinum Sponsor Allianz, our Hole Sponsor Audi, Beverage Cart Sponsor Hophaus and in-kind sponsor Wildbrumby.

We congratulate the winning teams for their fantastic efforts! Congratulations also to the closest-to-the-pin winner Peter Bennison who won a wonderful Hophaus gift pack including a voucher for a dinner for two guests at the restaurant. Longest drive winner Jonathan Allen will also feel very lucky when he uses his Audi voucher to spend a long weekend driving a brand-new Audi Q5 SUV!

For those players who did not make it onto the winners’ podium, there was the chance to win more fantastic prizes in the raffle, which were kindly donated by our member companies: The first prize went to Oliver Frobose, who took home a brand-new Bosch vacuum cleaner, the second prize – a Dr Oetker gift pack – was won by Russel Gleeson, and Ian Stewart won two tickets to the Chamber’s End of Year reception in Melbourne.

We would like to thank all of our sponsors and Huntingdale Golf Club for helping us make the German-Australian Chamber & Allianz Golf Day a big success. We would especially like to thank our main sponsor Allianz for their outstanding (and longstanding!) support. Our appreciation also extends to Audi, uvex and Sealed Air, who supported the day with their Hole Sponsorships and great gifts and prizes for our players. Thanks also to our Beverage cart sponsor Hophaus and to our in-kind sponsors Wildbrumby, Dr Oetker, Gerolsteiner, Huntingdale Golf Club and Bosch.

We also thank Minister Dalidakis to take time out of his busy schedule to attend our Golf Day.

As they say, the most important shot in golf is the next one. So, we hope to see you all next year again!

Written by Caroline Stapleton, German-Australian Chamber
End Of Year Receptions 2018

After a splendid year, we were very pleased to welcome our members and friends to our last events in 2018. We hosted our End of Year events this year in Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney.

The event in Queensland was the 5th edition of the European Tchin-Tchin Reception in cooperation with eight European Chambers – this year had a record-breaking attendance of 220 guests and was described as a beautiful evening on the rooftop of Flight Centre Travel Group.

In Victoria, we had the great pleasure to invite, together with our longstanding member BSH Home Appliances, our membership to an exclusive networking evening in the brand new Gaggenau Melbourne showroom.

Our Membership Director, Tina Thoms thanked all guests for attending the event and of course for supporting the Chamber network. Robert Warner, Director of Gaggenau followed up with some welcoming words on behalf of BSH and Gaggenau and invited guests to learn more about BSH’s great brands.

It was a fantastic opportunity to network with new and existing members, drive new business and hear about our member’s company developments over the past year whilst enjoying delicious drinks and canapes in an exclusive setting and a relaxed atmosphere.

It was a great evening amongst members and friends. A big thank-you to Philipp Walter, Managing Director of BSH Home Appliances for hosting our members at the impressive Gaggenau showroom.

In New South Wales we invited members and friends to our last event of the year at Hall & Wilcox. Our Premium Partner had offered to host our function at their premises and our guests took this opportunity to attend in significant numbers.

Alexandra Voss, Executive Director of the German-Australian Chamber welcomed our guests before thanking Oliver Jankowsky, Partner at Hall & Wilcox, for his generosity to host the event. Alexandra also thanked all attendees and members for their cooperation and support in 2018 and gave a short outlook of the upcoming year. Oliver then took the stage and gave an overview of the services provided by Hall & Wilcox and a recap of their achievements in 2018.

We were delighted about the turnout at the busiest time of the year with around 70 guests joining us to celebrate an exciting and successful year for the German-Australian Chamber. Guests stayed till after the official end of the event enjoying delicious canapés and drinks.

We are looking forward to welcoming everyone again in 2019 and wish our members and friends a wonderful Christmas and a good start into the New Year.

Written by Katja Mossner,
German-Australian Chamber
Cruise with the Europeans

A social highlight in the Chamber’s events calendar.

The Cruise with the Europeans sure is a social highlight in the Chamber’s events calendar. Every year it attracts over 600 members and friends across 15 European Chambers. On Thursday, 15 November the event was again a sell-out and the rainy weather forecast did not keep attendees away. Across three decks people mingled and networked over drinks and canapés.

Established Principal Partner Lufthansa was again ‘on board’ and had set up a timed competition game on Level 2. Attendees were invited to match airport codes with their respective cities in order to win two economy flights from Asia to Europe. The competition attracted many participants and it was a tight match. Eventually, the winners were Anne Margot Schoemaker, Business Operations Executive at Unilever International and Kevin Tan, Sales Coordinator at Cruise Bar, who decided to share the prize and keep one flight each.

After the two-hour cruise, the vessel returned to King Street Wharf and many attendees decided to join us at the after-party at All Hands Brewing House. The venue had generously extended their Happy Hour prices for our guests and people mingled until late in the partial indoor and outdoor area, enjoying drinks and snacks.

We would like to thank our Principal Partner, the Lufthansa Group, for generously supporting the Cruise with the Europeans again this year. Also, we would like to thank Gerolstein for providing natural mineral water for all attendees at the Cruise. We look forward to welcoming you again next year and hope to see you all at one of our many other events in the meantime.

Written by Eva Kosinski,
German-Australian Chamber
Breakfast Forum: The Future of Mobile Security

On 21 November the German-Australian Chamber of Industry and Commerce welcomed a group of approximately 40 guests to a Breakfast Forum on the topic of The Future of Mobile Security at the Grand Hyatt Melbourne.

Our guests were greeted by Alexandra Voss, the Chamber’s Executive Director, who travelled from Sydney to open the event.

Alexandra was pleased to introduce Carsten Ahrens, CEO of G+D Mobile Security Germany as the keynote speaker. Carsten was visiting Australia on the occasion of G+D Mobile Security Australia’s 20-year celebrations and presented insightful facts about managing digital identities, which he sees as the key to transparency and trust in the connected world. Carsten explained that "data is the new oil" and that "digital identities are the new currency", emphasising the value and importance of personal data. After his keynote, Carsten was joined on the panel by Matt Lange, Head of Cyber Security Strategy and Architecture at Australia Post and Vanja Joannidis, Senior Manager Cyber Security at EY.

A few topics the panel touched on:

- Despite the value of data, many organisations still don’t look after their most valuable asset in a professional way.
- Mobile security shouldn’t be an afterthought but should rather be planned in the initial stages of a project.
- Considering the sheer number of IoT devices that are connected to the Internet and how much data will be generated by those devices, the rapidly evolving cyber-threat landscape imposes security risks such as impersonation, identity theft, and hacking.
- At a time when consumers are using smartphones more than computers to access digital services, access needs to be simple, yet highly secure. Finding the balance between security and convenience is one of the biggest challenges of the industry.

It was an interesting discussion and we thank our speakers for taking the time out of a busy schedule to join us for our Breakfast Forum.

We would also like to thank Jacqueline Fitzpatrick, Managing Director of G+D Mobile Security in Australia for moderating the panel so eloquently. We appreciate G+D Mobile Security’s support and wish our member company another 20 successful years in Australia.

Written by Caroline Stapleton,
German-Australian Chamber

CEO Breakfast with Paul Sansom - Audi Australia

On 22 November eleven top managers of our member companies arrived at Audi Centre Sydney at 7.30 am for our exclusive CEO Breakfast with Audi Australia’s Managing Director Paul Sansom. Paul, who is also a member of the German-Australian Chamber Board of Directors, sparked an interesting discussion with his presentation on the topic of The Future of Automotive.

Paul’s opening statement summarised the industry’s outlook: the changes in the next two decades will be significantly more than those made within the last 100 years. Three main components will shape the future of the automotive industry: sustainability, digitalisation and urbanisation.

Legislators aim to reduce CO2 emissions, therefore taking a sustainable approach by the automotive industry is inevitable. However, due to lacking infrastructure of charging stations for electric vehicles only 0.2% of the new car market in Australia are electric vehicles. While hybrids are currently a good alternative, hydrogen-fuelled cars are still a thing for the future as its mass lacks density and requires large tanks to make an impact.

Digitalisation in the industry is marked by autonomy and connectivity. Autonomous driving and the technology are present with cruise control and lane keeping systems, but in order to reach full autonomy, legislation needs to be defined first. After that, we are looking at autonomous cars steering without a driver’s intervention and lounge-like cars without steering wheels at all. Intelligent smartphone integration and HD navigation will support the future autonomous driving experience.

Lastly, urbanisation and reduced traffic are key elements to look at in the future. The increased use of car sharing programs will raise the number of people on the road while reducing traffic time in rush hour by 1/3. More effective fleet management and self-parking are also options to reduce parking spaces needed and subsequent building sizes.

Paul’s presentation was truly engaging, underlining his points by using current examples of Audi’s fleet and its vision for Australia. Lots of questions were raised by our moderator Dr Jens Goennemann, Managing Director at the Advanced Manufacturing Growth Centre and also Member of the Board of Directors and the other guests about security measures for cars, car sharing and much more.

We would like to thank Paul Sansom for sharing his time and insights with our members. We also thank Audi Australia for their hospitality and Dr Jens Goennemann for his great and entertaining moderation which contributed to a successful event.

Written by Eva Kosinski,
German-Australian Chamber
One of AHK’s strategic initiatives is to foster business growth for German companies operating in Australia by leveraging on Australia’s close business ties with its geographical neighbours in Asia.

This has led to a series of initiatives with an APAC focus over the last years, notably the business delegation to Hong Kong in 2016, and AHK’s own Asia-Pacific Regional Conference in Perth in 2017. This year saw another business delegation organised by the Chamber, this time to Jakarta / Indonesia. Like in 2016, the occasion was the bi-annual Asia-Pacific Conference of German Business (APK) from 1 to 3 November, which was attended by around one thousand decision-makers from business, government and academia.

The following morning, the official program commenced with a visit to the Australian Embassy to Indonesia. In order to learn about the political and economic situation in Indonesia, particular in an Australian and a German context, participants heard from the Australian Ambassador to Indonesia, His Excellency Gary Quinlan, and German Ambassador to Indonesia, His Excellency Dr Peter Schoof, who captivated the audience with fascinating observations about the close yet particular relationship of their two countries with Indonesia. Sally-Ann Watts, General Manager ASEAN & Pacific at Austrade Indonesia, expertly added some economic insights to the presentations.

The next item on the itinerary was a high-level meeting at the Indonesian Investment Coordinating Board (BKPM), which is headed by Indonesian federal Minister Tom Lembong. A close friend and adept of Australia, in his dialogue with Minister Cormann he offered valuable insights into the opportunities that present themselves to foreign financial investors. After an opportunity for Q&A, the group was offered lunch, followed by a short tour around the public part of the Ministry to showcase the newly launched investment application business centre.

Another bus ride through busy Jakarta traffic then took the delegation to the ‘Greenhouse’, one of Jakarta’s leading start-up hubs, with the objective to learn about innovation and commercialisation in Indonesia’s vibrant tech scene. (In the process, delegates were presented with the fact that Jakarta is the world’s twitter capital, with more tweets generated daily than in any other city in the world). After a brief introduction by Minister Cormann, a panel discussion with three young Indonesian entrepreneurs offered insights into the opportunities and challenges for start-ups. Remarkably, the majority of presenters came from an international background and were attracted to Jakarta to found their business by the opportunities presented by the local market.

Coffee and drinks at the spectacularly positioned Greenhouse bar, including an opportunity for further networking, concluded this part of the program.

To wrap-up the day, the delegation was then ferried to the Kunstkring Palais, a heritage-listed, colonial-style restaurant. Over a multi-course dinner presented by the waiters in traditional Indonesian fashion, the Australian
delegates were offered the opportunity to meet and discuss with invited representatives of Australian businesses operating in Indonesia, as well as members of the German delegation to APK.

Day two of the delegation commenced with a socio-economic briefing on Indonesia, allowing the delegates to better understand the societal context for potential investment decision in the country. Prof. Dr Franz Magnis-Suseno, who lectured in philosophy in Germany as part of his career, and James Massola, South-East Asia correspondent of the Sydney Morning Herald and based in Jakarta, brought two very different but equally enlightening perspectives on Indonesia to the discussion, moderated by Alexandra Voss, Executive Director of the German-Australian Chamber. Their insights ranged from questions around Islamism and fundamentalism and their roles in society and politics to the upcoming presidential elections in early 2019. An engaging Q&A concluded the first event of the day.

The final item on the itinerary of formal engagements was the meeting and discussion with the Jakarta City Planning office at Jakarta Smart City Lounge. This local government institution is charged with managing Jakarta’s public infrastructure, from utility services to public transport. Digitalisation and interconnectivity were the key messages of the presentations given by the heads of various departments. The delegates got a comprehensive overview of current and future initiatives, and further discussions regarding participation in government tenders for future projects were encouraged. To conclude the meeting, Minister Cormann and the delegates were presented with a token of appreciation in front of local media.

With the formal meetings completed, part of the delegation split from the group for individual commitments, whilst the other part embarked on a sightseeing tour of Jakarta, visiting Fatahilah Square with a light lunch at Café Batavia, and Istiqlal Mosque. The evening program of the day was kicked off by a private reception by the Head of Delegation at the Fairmont Hotel, where delegates had the opportunity to meet some of the other guests visiting APK. After a short address by the Minister, which evoked the spirit of successful collaboration between Germany and Australia, delegates were ushered to the Fairmont ballroom for the official opening reception of APK 2018.

Days three and four of the delegation were spent attending the official APK conference program, where one highlight for the delegates certainly was the opportunity to attend the bilateral consultation and signing of an MOU between Peter Altmaier, German Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy, and Minister Cormann.

The German-Australian Chamber of Industry and Commerce would like to thank AHK EKONID Indonesia, Austrade, the Department of Finance, and the Australian Embassy in Jakarta for their support in making the delegation a success.

Written by Lars Mehlan,
German-Australian Chamber
Cyber Security for Germany and Australia

The German-Australian Chamber had the pleasure of collaborating with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung to organise a roundtable discussion in Sydney on the occasion of a visit of Professor Dr Günter Krings, Parliamentary State Secretary at the German Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community.

The roundtable featured Prof. Krings and a small German delegation, German Consul General Peter Silberberg, Dr Beatrice Gorawantschy, Director Regional Program Australia and the Pacific Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, and industry experts from the German-Australian business community. The roundtable discussed various aspects of cyber security affecting Germany, Europe and Australia.

Those topics included the threats by cyber attacks on government, companies and individuals as well as public infrastructure. It became clear that cyber risks are particularly relevant for highly interconnected systems such as the ones used in advanced manufacturing / Industry 4.0 applications. It is a shared responsibility to protect relevant systems from cyber attacks; it is also important to keep in mind that often the weakest link in an integrated system is attacked. Professor Krings pointed out that the German government, in collaboration with the European Union, is highly active in protecting its systems, critical infrastructure and is working closely with the business sector and individuals. It is essential to avoid cyber attacks and to be able to respond appropriately when they happen. This topic is of equally high importance in Germany and Australia and experience and insights are being shared on the bilateral level as well as between industry and governments. Besides the risk of cyber attacks gaining unauthorised access to information or systems, there is also the additional risk of data sabotage that needs to be taken seriously to ensure trust in systems and information provided.

The industry participants in the roundtable discussion made it clear that industry is already collaborating closely with governments to increase protection and responses to cyber attacks and that cyber security is also a significant global growth market that needs to be taken seriously as part of every organisation’s risk management. It was agreed that this field should be discussed further and that there is a particularly strong case for close German-Australian collaboration.

Written by Dr. Michael Zettinig, German-Australian Chamber.

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Every new language is like an open window that shows a new view of the world and expands your attitude towards life.” Frank Harris (1856-1931)
EU-Australia Leadership Forum 2018

Following on from the success of the first event in Sydney in June 2017, the second EU-Australia Leadership Forum took place in Brussels in November 2018. This project was bringing together about 110 senior leaders from all over the EU and Australia and 50 emerging leaders from the EU and Australia to broaden and deepen the existing ties and in doing so, help shape the vision for the partnership, based on the future EU-Australia Framework Agreement and forthcoming EU-Australia Free Trade Agreement.

Participants come from a variety of sectors, including government and opposition, business, science and academia, civil society and media. The project is funded by the European Union through the Partnership Instrument and supported by the Australian government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The German-Australian Chamber is part of the consortium that has been competitively selected to manage the project. The other partners are the Australian Institute of International Affairs and a specialist consultancy, Stantec. I have been personally selected to be one of the three managers in the project, so the Forum has been the culmination of months of preparations.

The Leadership Forum consisted of an education and discussion part exclusively for the emerging leaders, followed by a joint program of emerging and senior leaders where specific ideas for an even deeper relationship between the EU and Australia were discussed by the experts. The topics of the roundtable discussions ranged from Industry 4.0 to space collaboration, women’s leadership, movement of people to the environment and climate change. It proved to be a particularly valuable approach to have experts from very different fields discuss those topics for closer collaboration. While the discussions were held under Chatham House rules, it can be reported that for example having cyber security experts provide input into the Industry 4.0 and space collaboration discussions has been very fruitful.

The roundtable discussions were preceded by top-level panel discussions and a gala dinner with Herman van Rompuy as the keynote speaker. Panel speakers included Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, Australian Ambassador Justin Brown, Duncan Lewis, Director-General of Security, Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, Laura Tingle, Chief Political Correspondent at ABC’s 7.30 program, Cecilia Malmström, European Union Commissioner for Trade, The Hon Simon Crean, Deputy Chair of the European Australian Business Council (EABC), and many other outstanding leaders from both regions.

In addition to the highly interactive panel discussions and roundtables, the professional networking of the participants was supported by networking events at Brussels Town Hall for the emerging leaders as well as “nightcaps”, late evening discussions, in small groups covering topics such as Australian and EU values chaired by the Hon Brendan Nelson, the Free Trade Agreement or political culture.

The five-day event has been very successful with a large number of ideas and proposals developed by the leaders in the roundtable discussions, ranging from “low-hanging fruits” to ambitious and complex proposals; the leaders also deepened their personal understanding for the other region and their professional networks.

I want to thank the participants, including the large group of German and German-Australian leaders, for their active participation and partners such as the EABC, German Australian Business Council and DFAT for the excellent collaboration in the lead-up to and during this complex event.

Written by Dr Michael Zettinig, German-Australian Chamber
As the e-commerce industry generates global sales upward of USD $2.3 trillion annually, concerns about the survival of brick-and-mortar stores are repeatedly being raised in every market. On the contrary to popular belief, brick-and-mortar is capable of thriving off the innovations of the e-commerce sector.

Consumers are more tech-savvy than ever, as new technologies emerge and shopping channels continually become smarter, faster and better. However, the rise of Research Online, Purchase Offline (ROPO) has significantly impacted the way consumers utilise brick-and-mortar stores to their convenience. Purchases made in store are increasingly being influenced by incentive digital interactions the consumer has had with brands and products online.

John Sardelic, Director of ANZ at Productsup, the leading product content integration, syndication and feed management platform, says there are six key levers that help brands with physical stores to increase in-store foot traffic with the best end-to-end execution.

1. Educate consumers on local offerings with Local Inventory Ads

The consumer’s expectation for immediacy and convenience means retailers must comply or die out, both online and offline. Online, they expect a seamless, simple shopping experience. Offline, they want to walk into a single shop and know that what they are looking for is there. In order for retailers to meet this consumer expectation, they need to educate their shoppers on local offerings before they walk into the shop. This is made possible with Local Inventory Ads (LIAs) which is offered by three major channels, Google, Bing and Facebook.

When working with Facebook LIAs, the channel introduced a measurement solution, Offline Conversions, to help evaluate the impact of ads on offline conversion.

2. Implement Click-and-Collect

Offer the convenience of online shopping, with the immediacy and tangibility of in-store pickup or returns. Brands have an opportunity to combine the accessibility of physical stores with the strength of e-commerce to provide new and exciting ways for customers to shop with them.

3. Optimise Google My Business listings

With Google My Business, retailers can now make sure their local-level contact information is readily available for anyone who is searching for it online.

For enterprise brick-and-mortar retailers with hundreds to thousands of physical locations, it is important to stay consistent with the store name and category. For example, instead of say “IKEA” for each location, rather than “IKEA – Sydney.” This will help Google more easily surface each store on Google Maps and Search. Moreover, to maximise the effectiveness of Google My Business listings, consider including a logo as an image as well as photos of stock and the local store itself. It is important to have only one Google My Business account for all locations to ensure consistency. However, each location should have an individual sub-account to maintain local information.

4. Utilise Google Shopping Actions

With the Shopping Actions program, retailers can have their local in-store products seen on Google platforms like Assistant, Express, and Google.com. Complete with a universal shopping cart and a Google-hosted checkout flow, the program makes it simple for shoppers to take action wherever and however they are shopping.

As of today, Google has recorded a 30% increase in basket size for retailers participating in the program.

5. Give subscribers personalised, local offers in-store

Today’s consumer expects a high degree of personalisation. Social media followers and subscribers respond to content that offers deals personally relevant to them. Retailers should aim to create a unique in-store experience – one that shoppers just can’t get online. For example, for every $10 spent in-store, the store donates $1 to a local charity of the customer’s choice. Not only does it boost customer intent to return to the store, but it also strengthens brand reputation.

Great in-store experiences often lead to great reviews, which play a huge role in attracting new customers or not.
6. Optimise product data agility to evolve and adapt fast

To successfully implement any strategies that drive in-store traffic, product data must be efficiently managed to ensure it is up-to-date, complete and compelling.

Short-term, streamlined processes and data agility allows retailers to adjust to changing feed specs and to enter new channels seamlessly. It also helps to quickly and easily onboard new products and vendors to keep inventory evolving and engaging for customers.

Long-term, the challenging matrix of channels and innovations in consumer technology demands commerce players to be able to transform their data efficiently to maximise revenue potential in a fast-paced and ever-changing environment. With the right tools, retailers can be prepared to test and leverage emerging channels that will inevitably impact the shopping ecosystem, such as virtual reality malls, self-driving cars, voice search and more.

In the end, retailers who embrace digitalisation are future-proofing their business and capable of not only surviving the growth of e-commerce, but thriving from it.

Written by John Sardelic, Director Australia & New Zealand at Productsup, DeInternational Business Representation client

ABOUT PRODUCTSUP

Headquartered in Berlin, Germany, Productsup provides a leading solution for product content integration, syndication and feed management.

The cloud-based, centralized platform enables the seamless transfer of product content from brands, manufacturers, and retailers to marketing and shopping channels around the world. It empowers commerce players to be agile and stay at the forefront of digital transformation.

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Brexit: An Inside View From the German-British Chamber of Industry & Commerce

Dr Hoppe, the United Kingdom (UK) is due to leave the European Union (EU) on 29 March 2019. What is the current situation in the UK?

The negotiations about the Withdrawal Agreement were concluded in late autumn 2018 and the draft proposals were agreed by both, the British government and EU leaders. However, Theresa May, the British Prime Minister, still needs to ‘sell’ the agreement to both, the British government and EU leaders. The vote in Parliament on the agreement was originally scheduled for December 2018 but had to be postponed as too many MPs from both main parties had indicated that they would vote against it. Over the Christmas period Theresa May tried to convince many of her MPs to back the agreement, and perhaps it will pass in January 2019, when a majority of all MPs, out of a feeling of national responsibility, may vote for it to avoid a no-deal Brexit or a postponement of Brexit.

What consequences would ‘No Deal’ have?

For business, no deal would cause a shock, as there would be no transition period, and the UK would lose all of its current free trade deals and many other EU-based market access agreements overnight. As a consequence, it would inflict immediate chaos on the UK but to some extent also on the EU. Clogged-up ports and roads and the resulting shortages of time-critical goods are often-cited examples of potential problems, though the medium to long-term impact on internal and external security in Europe, resulting from an acrimonious divorce, would probably lead to even greater costs for everyone in the long run.

What happens if MPs vote down the Withdrawal Agreement?

Assuming that the exit agreement is not passed by the UK Parliament by January 2019, we can expect the markets to react swiftly, and it will quickly become clear that some kind of short-term extension of the UK’s EU membership will be necessary. Therefore, the best possible outcome at the moment is for the deal to be passed by Parliament – even if it requires some last-minute changes to the exit agreement and to the declaration on the future relationship. Business in Britain and across Europe has a role to play now. It needs to make its voice heard so that a very costly no-deal scenario does not accidentally become a reality.

What effect does the current uncertainty have on businesses?

Businesses have been unable to make concrete plans for the future and the resulting wait-and-see attitude has led to some investment being put on hold or cancelled, the setting up of subsidiaries in other EU countries, the change of supply chains and/or the moving of production locations/offices abroad, or the employment of fewer staff. Larger companies have planned in detail for a no-deal scenario and some have implemented these plans already. And while most internationally active UK companies are aware that Brexit will bring higher costs, especially on the administrative side, smaller companies, in particular, are unable to gauge the true expense to come – therefore more clarity about the eventual operating and regulatory environment is needed urgently.

What questions do German companies ask most often and how do you support them?

Most companies have specific questions, but as long as the exit agreement is not secured, it is difficult to advise anything concrete. Therefore we recommend companies check their supply chains, customer structure, staff base and any contracts running beyond March 2019 very closely to find out what changes may affect them.

The British government, the DIHK and the EU have produced helpful checklists and instructions, including for the No-Deal scenario. More information is also available on our website: https://grossbritannien.ahk.de.

What’s your prognosis for the development of German-British business relations, and those around the globe?

Assuming an exit agreement will be agreed, it will largely be business as usual during the transition phase until December 2020. However, it is uncertain how the administrative and regulatory environment will develop afterwards as the declaration on the future relationship is very vague and just a declaration with no legally binding effect. However, if no exit agreement can be reached, the UK will continue to apply a great number of EU laws and regulations, so that business has some certainty (but only some) to plan ahead despite the lack of a transition period.

A significant feature of Brexit is that the UK wants to strike her own free-trade deals around the globe. In any case, German-British business relations are very strong and independent of how these trade negotiations will work out, Germany will remain an important business partner for the UK. The UK aims to strengthen business relations especially with Commonwealth countries, and Australia is a priority. However, how soon that will be possible depends on the exit agreement and the terms of the future relationship with the EU. In any case, trade negotiations are a lengthy affair, so do not expect real progress soon!

Provided by the German-British Chamber of Industry & Commerce
Are you ready for BREXIT?

DIFF checklist for companies

Brexit-Deal or WTO status?

It is more than two years since a narrow majority of the British population voted to leave the European Union. On 30 March 2019, the United Kingdom will become a “third country” from a European perspective. This decision has drastic consequences in many areas, in particular economically. The United Kingdom is the fifth largest export market for Germany.

Whether it will be possible to conclude a withdrawal agreement between the EU-27 and the United Kingdom is at the moment uncertain. Should an agreement not be reached with a follow-up solution, trade between Great Britain and the EU would take place under WTO rules only. Because of this uncertainty, Brexit is already casting its first shadows. Germany’s exports to the United Kingdom decreased by about two per cent in 2018. At the same time, the exports to the EU as a whole increased significantly.

Checklist – Is your Company fit for Brexit?

Since decades the UK has been a member of the European Single Market and complex delivery chains and “just-in-time” production processes have been established. German companies with business relations to the United Kingdom should deal with the numerous effects of Brexit at an early stage. In order to give an initial orientation, the DIHK has published a Brexit checklist (www.ihk.de/brexitcheck-en). This checklist consists of 18 topics that serve as a guideline for companies. Apart from other topics, the possible impacts of Brexit on trading with goods are particularly adverse.

Britain’s withdrawal from the EU will sooner or later be associated with the imposition of customs duties. The DIHK points out the following three issues:

First, if the EU and the UK do not conclude a withdrawal agreement, the goods traded with the UK will be subject to WTO import and export duties. For example, this could cost the German car industry more than EUR 2 billion of tariffs each year. Second, in the case of a free trade agreement, German companies should make use of tariff preferences. This includes the calculation of preferential EU origin along rules of origin to be defined as well as the issue of proofs of origin. Third, EU internal supplier’s declarations (LE) and long-term supplier’s declarations (LLE) for goods with preferential originating status may not be issued to or by British companies under the Brexit.

Dealing with Customs Formalities

Companies importing or exporting goods between Germany and the UK should also pay attention to customs formalities. This includes the creation of personnel, administrative and technical resources for the preparation and administration of customs declarations. It is also advisable for companies to familiarize themselves with the practical preparation of customs declarations or to look for a service provider to represent them under customs law. Companies that already deliver to other countries outside the EU – for example to Switzerland – and thus deal with customs clearance should check whether their capacities are sufficient for the additional movement of goods. Professional equipment that is only used temporarily in the UK must also be exported and imported.

Prohibitions and restrictions on the cross-border movement of goods

Prohibitions and restrictions can also become relevant. It is strongly recommended that companies familiarize themselves with the applicable control regulations of the EU and Germany on bans and restrictions on the cross-border movement of goods with third countries. In addition, companies should be familiar with the authorities responsible for the notification or approval of exports and imports, the application process (e.g. BAFA, Federal Environment Agency, State Offices for Food Safety) and the requirements for the company’s own compliance structures (appointment of an export officer, preparation of work and organizational instructions for export control).

The DIHK provides comprehensive information

Apart from the Brexit checklist (www.ihk.de/brexitcheck-en), which is constantly updated, the DIHK has already used several surveys to examine possible effects on investments and location decisions. In addition, a monthly Brexit newsletter informs the companies. At numerous events in Germany, Brussels and London, companies have the opportunity to obtain comprehensive information on the current status and possible consequences of Brexit.

Provided by DIHK

ECONOMIC RELATIONS UK/GERMANY

• The United Kingdom is Germany’s fifth largest trading partner (2017: export/import: €122 billion). The UK is the fifth largest export market to Germany (in 2016: third largest), about 750,000 jobs in Germany depend on exports to Great Britain.

• Up to the present day, production and operations have been set up by the German side worth €140 billion in Great Britain. British companies have 1,400 branches in Germany with overall 240,000 employees. German companies have 2,500 branches in the UK with about 400,000 employees.

• In 2017, exports to the UK decreased by 2% as compared to the year before. For comparison, German exports to the EU increased significantly over the same period. The tendency has continued since January 2018 (~2%).

• DIHK expects up to €10 Million additional customs declarations and over €200 million additional costs for customs bureaucracy for companies: In case of ‘no deal’, the German automotive industry is threatened with more than €2 billion in annual tariffs.

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Brexit: What It Entails and Why

By Professor Pascalis Raimondos (QUT) and Professor Sara McGaughey (Griffith)

Brexit is the perfect natural policy experiment, i.e. an unexpected shock that allows one to map out the effects that government policy has on businesses. What happened on 23 June 2016 in Great Britain – when more than 30 million people participated in a referendum that resulted in 51.9% voting in favour of the UK exiting the EU – was not anticipated by the markets. The November 2018 developments have reinforced that we still do not know what is going to happen.

We won’t actually know the precise effects for many years, but we can be sure that researchers have already started thinking about it. Several ‘event’ studies have already emerged that examine how share prices have been affected by the 2016 vote. These studies show that while there are always losers and winners, uncertainty overall hurts businesses.

In order to understand where the Brexit uncertainty comes from, let’s first go back to some fundamentals on trade agreements.

There are three levels of trade agreements:

- A free trade area (FTA) is level one: all tariffs are set to zero for internal trade (within the FTA) while external trade (outside the FTA) faces a tariff determined by the individual country. The typical example is the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between Mexico, USA and Canada, which came into effect on 1st January 1994. Since each country can decide on its own external tariff, a FTA needs to be complemented by an extensive rules-of-origin (ROOs) agreement that determines what makes a product, say, Mexican.

- A customs union (CU) is level two: it builds on the FTA, but now even the trade outside the area faces a common tariff. Since all CU countries have the same external tariff, ROOs are not needed. The typical example of a customs union was the European Economic Community (EEC) up until 1st November 1993.

- A common market is level three: it builds on the CU, but now it is not only goods that can move freely within the union but also labour and capital – a truly single market. The typical example is the European Union that was founded by the Maastricht treaty on 7th February 1992 and came into force from 1st November 1993.
On top of these trade agreements, countries can agree to enter a common monetary policy and thus a common currency. An example of this is the Eurozone, established 1st January 1999. Further collaboration in terms of fiscal policy (i.e. common taxes) brings countries closer towards a federation where basically there is only one country left.

The BREXIT referendum was about the withdrawal of Britain from the EU and, as such, the UK’s potential withdrawal from both the customs union and the common market. Since the BREXIT vote two years ago, the negotiations between Britain and the EU have been about finding the best solution for both partners.

The possible options for Britain were the following:

**Option 1: Moving from level 3 to level 2**

If Britain wants to leave only the single market (no free migration into Britain) it could try to negotiate a customs union agreement similar to, for example, what Turkey has with the EU. Sorting out the visa issues of the millions of British people living in the EU (and vice versa) would be the focus. National borders would only be important for the movement of people, as goods would still be traded freely between Britain and the EU.

Option 2: Moving from level 3 to level 1

If Britain wants to leave both the customs union and the single market, then it could try to negotiate a FTA agreement, similar to what Norway or Switzerland has with the EU. On top of the visa issues, the ROOs would have to be negotiated with the EU. National borders would be important both for people and for goods as both must have a ‘country of origin’.

Option 3: ‘No deal’

Finally, if Britain wants to have no trading agreement whatsoever with the EU, then it could trade under the so-called WTO rules that every member of the World Trade Organization has to follow. Britain will be like Australia when it comes to trading with the EU – no ROOs need to be specified.

While the standing alone option (#3) is the one that Britain can decide unilaterally, it is also the option where the economic losses will be largest. Firms will have little incentive to locate in the UK and will prefer to re-locate within the large EU market. The HM Treasury estimated that the losses of ‘standing alone’ could be as large as a 7.6% drop in the UK’s GDP.

Option #2 of a FTA makes border control for trading products essential. However, reintroducing a physical border that separates Northern Ireland from the Republic of Ireland is unlikely. The 1998 Good Friday Agreement (also known as the Belfast Agreement) between the UK and Ireland remains a core constitutional text of the two nations. Among other things, it commits the nations to North-South cooperation and guarantees the absence of the ‘hard border’ that would be necessary for a FTA between the EU and UK. The Agreement effectively constrains how UK can leave the EU, and requires the UK and Ireland to jointly consider the impact of BREXIT on cross-border issues.

Option #1 is the least costly and the most likely given that borders are not important for goods trading within a customs union. Indeed, this is also the solution that the EU recently agreed with the Prime Minister Theresa May in November, and which the British Parliament must approve in January 2019.

However, while this solution allows Britain to control its migration flows, to stop paying to the EU, and to make its own rules and regulations, it locks Britain into a set of trading rules over which Britain will have no influence. Such an outcome is clearly not a long-term solution and will not remove the uncertainties that businesses face – it will actually aggravate them!

Written by Professor Pascalis Raimondos (pascalis.raimondos@qut.edu.au) and Professor Sara McGaughey (s.megaughey@griffith.edu.au)

Footnotes:

2) Without ROOs Mexico can decide that all Chinese goods enter Mexico at a very low tariff, and then they are transported into the US as Mexican goods, thereby paying zero border taxes. Mexico gets all the tariff revenues while US gets zero tariff revenues for the goods that American consumers want to buy from China.
3) See HM Treasury (2016).
4) See Green (2017) for a detailed discussion.

References:


www.germany.org.au
A Difficult Road Ahead for May and Britain

While Theresa May has faced down a challenge from opponents within her party, it looks unlikely that House of Commons will adopt the plan she negotiated with the EU to usher the United Kingdom out of the European Union.

May fended off the challenge in December from within the right wing of her ruling Conservative Party. Centred on the “European Research Group” (ERG) led by Jacob Rees-Mogg and supported by former Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, this group supports Brexit but bitterly opposes May’s plan for exiting the union. That plan was negotiated with the EU and endorsed by both the EU and Britain in late November. At the same time as the deal was in its final stages of confirmation, the ERG initiated the procedure leading to the motion of no confidence in May’s leadership. It was only after May withdrew a vote on her deal scheduled for December 11 that the motion of no confidence gained the support of 48 MPs needed to take it to a vote. Even then it captured about a third of the votes of Conservative Party MPs. One interpretation is therefore that the ERG has revealed its weakness and will not be a potent force in the Brexit discussions going forward.

More likely, however, discussions in Britain after the vote will likely be as contentious as before. By withdrawing the vote on the plan for Brexit that she negotiated with the EU, May has demonstrated what should, in any case, be obvious: with significant opposition for the plan in her party, there is no chance it will be accepted by the House of Commons.

The ERG and aligned forces in the Conservative Party see May’s plan as offering too many concessions to Europe. They also bitterly oppose the “backstop” on Northern Ireland, a solution designed to avoid a hard border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The backstop would make Northern Ireland subject to EU customs laws until the EU can agree that no border between the Republic of Ireland, an EU member state, and Northern Ireland is needed to regulate trade. The DUP, a Northern Irish Party that supports May’s coalition, is dead set against the deal, as it leaves the decision as to whether Northern Ireland’s trade regulation is subject to EU or British rules largely in the hands of the EU.

After the vote, Britain faces three broad futures in May’s pursuit of Brexit, none of which are pretty.

First, the vote on the current Brexit plan is now due in the Commons on January 14. It will almost certainly fail. Renegotiation of the deal with Brussels is possible, but highly unlikely. Constant negotiation is a hallmark of European politics, and a fairly senior figure within the European foreign affairs machinery suggested to me in November that he...
fully expected the vote on Brexit to fail in the Commons, but also that he thought the EU would be open to renegotiation in the case of failure. However, so far May’s approaches to the EU have been rebuffed. European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker has stated that there can be no further negotiation. Initially, this may have been interpreted as a ploy to establish a strong position before going into talks, but the EU’s position now looks firmly entrenched. Indeed, Juncker knows that the ERG and its allies will never be satisfied with any deal that is palatable to Brussels, so there is little point in further negotiation.

That leaves open the prospect of the European Union crashing out of Europe after the official deadline for a Brexit deal ends in March 2019. Officials and business executives, I discussed this within Brussels in November admitted to me that they had no idea the extent to which this would damage either the EU or the UK economically. Both parties are subject to at least 750—no one appears to know the precise number—treaties that will need to be renegotiated.

The United Kingdom stepping out of these treaties, around 550 of which deal with trade, regulatory cooperation and customs agreements with the other EU states, will likely cause significant disruptions to supply chains in the manufacturing sector. The integrated European economy means that parts crisscross the English Channel dozens of times as refinements are made towards the finished product. One executive of a major technology company in Europe told me that Brexit is already having an impact on his bottom line, as he is having to stockpile parts that are subject to cross-Channel trade to guarantee adequate supply after March.

The final way forward for Britain is simply to revoke Brexit, an option the European Court of Justice has decided is within its purview. To this end, May could negotiate an extension to the Brexit deadline which would give the government time to organise another referendum on her deal, and indeed on Brexit itself, and then revoke the intention to withdraw if a majority opposes leaving the EU—which they now likely will.

As a long-standing member of the Union, Britain was in the past able to negotiate exceptions to many EU rules such as passport-free travel and membership in the Eurozone.

Revoking the deal, while it would be a major backdown for the Conservatives, would give the country time to reassess the pros and cons of Brexit in a more orderly fashion than was afforded to them in the run-up to the last referendum. This would include a consideration of perks that Britain receives and which other members of the EU do not.

If at some future point, Britain decided to rejoin the EU, it would have to do so according to the current rules of member states. The current rush towards Brexit was poorly planned and has become something of a farce, and Britain is giving up the advantages it has over other members of the EU for an uncertain future outside the bloc.

May is adamant, however, that her government will see Brexit through according to her plan. It is hard, however, to see how this would be possible. It would be better for parliament to revoke Brexit and then restart a sensible conversation on EU membership now that Britons are more aware of the consequences. If after careful consideration, a majority of Britons still feel that leaving the EU is the correct decision, then the government can debate steps forward before rushing again into negotiations with Brussels.

Written by Bryce Wakefield, National Deputy Director of the Australian Institute of International Affairs

He was recently in Brussels as leader of the organisation team of the EU-Australia Leadership Forum.
Deal or No Deal?

The key question regarding the Brexit implications is whether the UK Government can reach an agreement with the EU on the conditions of the UK’s exit from the EU.

Deal or no deal? The Withdrawal Agreement (WA) was published on 14 November with an accompanying ‘Outline Political Declaration’ (ODP), and on 22 November the full Political Declaration was published. These were approved on 25 November 2018 by the EU Council. The draft WA provides us with some clarity about what will happen if there is a deal, what would happen at the end of the already agreed ‘status quo’ transition which runs out at the end of 2020. But this must also be agreed upon by the UK. Therefore, it is relevant to consider and be prepared for the two fundamental alternatives, which would appear to be the following two scenarios:

**NO DEAL**

**By March 2019:** no final agreement on citizens’ rights, finances, the Irish border or other critical issues.

**What this means:** While an extreme form of ‘no deal’ (e.g. no agreement on aviation) ought to be avoided, this outcome would mean very significant change.

- Introduction of tariffs on all goods at WTO rates.
- Customs introduced and other non-tariff barriers, creating a potential for delays and costs.
- Inability to trade with the EU in some areas, mainly heavily regulated / service sectors (FS, pharma).
- No agreed regulatory cooperation and potential for future divergence.
- Loss of access to all EU funding.
- No agreed facilitation of free movement between UK-EU.

It could also mean no transition, according to the EU, with a transfer to ‘WTO’ terms immediately in April 2019.

**DEAL**

**By March 2019:** Agreed exit terms, trade framework and ‘transition period’ with the continuation of trade talks.

**What this means:** This scenario is not the status quo – it involves the possibility of major changes.

Following the 21 months transition, UK/EU trade will move to new terms, either:

- a ‘high alignment deal’ with the UK effectively staying in the customs union and single market for goods, with restrictions on market access for services and free movement; or,
- a ‘low alignment deal’ that builds upon the EU-Canada Free Trade Agreement (CETA), with the UK leaving the customs union and single market, with the introduction of customs, rules of origin, significantly reduced market access for services and the end of free movement.

Of these, the ‘low alignment deal’ will have a much higher impact on UK-EU goods trade but will open up more opportunities for new trade deals.

These alternatives have a multitude of issues associated with them, some common some different, which businesses must consider, irrespective of whether they are European /UK businesses or Australian businesses operating in Europe/the UK. The operating model of many businesses will have to consider changing regulatory requirements, the required change in the footprint of its operation across Europe/the UK, the human resource implications and how employees are affected to name a few of the relevant aspects.

The purpose of this Article is to look at the tax implication of the Brexit alternatives, both for indirect and direct tax aspects.

**Indirect Tax Issues**

The above alternatives have substantially different implications for the indirect tax and customs outcomes of Brexit. The most important impact of the different outcomes of the Brexit negotiations will be in the area of customs. In particular, in a "no-deal" scenario, this will potentially not only impose customs duty on the flow of goods between European countries and the UK but also add additional costs to businesses in terms the identification of the relevant duties, broker costs, time delays in the actual transport and through the required compliance.

With regard to VAT, transactions and the acquisitions and deliveries of goods and services between Europe and the UK will no longer be treated as intra-Community transactions but as imports and exports outside the EU, making the administrative management of transactions between the EU and the UK more complex and cumbersome (compulsory appointment of a tax representative, VAT refund procedures, adaptation of systems such as ERP and invoicing systems).

**Direct Taxes**

In the area of direct taxes, the most important impact of Brexit is potentially in the area of withholding taxes, in particular on dividends, interest & royalties. These taxes follow European Directives.

The EU Parent Subsidiary-Directive provides relief from withholding taxes on dividend payments made between associated companies in different EU states and provides double taxation relief to parent companies on profits of subsidiary companies. This will no longer apply to the UK and companies will need to rely on the double taxation treaties in place to benefit from preferential withholding tax rates.

An Australian business which invested in Europe and Germany through the UK and which to date could have benefited from the Parent-Subsidiary Directive in respect of dividend payments from its indirect German subsidiary made via the European holding company in the UK may find these dividends exposed to German dividend withholding tax in the future. While the effect of the Parent Subsidiary-Directive would potentially be replaced by the UK / German double tax agreement, this would not provide the same protection as the former EU Directive. In fact, an Australian listed company may be better
off investing in Germany directly under the benefits provided by the Australian/German double tax agreement.

The EU Interest and Royalties Directive will no longer be available to relieve withholding taxes on royalty and interest payments between UK companies and associated companies in the EU and it will therefore be important for UK companies to explore the extent to which relief from interest and royalty withholding tax is available under any double taxation treaty. This would equally be relevant for any Australian businesses which structured their financing or provision of intellectual property, or other supplies and services which attract royalty withholding tax via their operations in the UK.

The EU also reached political agreement on the EU Anti-Tax Avoidance Directive (ATAD), which is effectively the European implementation of the OECD BEPS proposals. While the UK has already implemented various tax-avoidance measures unilaterally, the UK leaving the EU and the framework of the Directive increases the risk for business of unilateral and potentially competing rules between the UK and the remaining EU states.

Australian business investing into Europe through the UK should therefore consider whether their current structures will still be appropriate post Brexit.

What should businesses be doing now?

Right now, the imperative remains to focus on ‘no deal’ planning, taking decisions where necessary in the absence of certainty. Businesses should monitor the political developments, and respond accordingly, but try not to get caught up in the “noise”.

Looking further ahead to what a deal means for business, ultimately the message is that there remains a lot of uncertainty about the final outcome, and quite a bit of uncertainty about the journey there beyond the end of the transition in 2020. Despite this, there is still enough clarity on the different scenarios to allow for meaningful plans to be prepared now.

While the final outcome is uncertain, there are a few ‘no regret’ actions businesses can take now, such as knowing their supply chain, reviewing contracts, and engaging employees. These will help to prepare for all eventualities, regardless of the deal we end up with, or even if we don’t end up with one at all.

Written by Christian Holle, Partner, PwC Australia
Could Brexit Be Good For the Logistics Industry?

With the UK set to leave the EU and the single market, uncertainties lie ahead for the logistics operators in the region. However, as Thomas Hansen, regional director for Röhlig Australia and New Zealand explains, disruption from Brexit could shake up the entire industry, offering scope for innovation and growth.

Logistics is already evolving

From the Australian viewpoint, Brexit won’t have a huge effect on business down under. Röhlig in Australia is not involved in land transport in Europe, hence the effect on our service offerings will be limited. Here, a major part of our business is the consignee routed market, so 60-70% of decision-making regarding freight and distribution is made locally. Röhlig in Germany will continue to handle most of the business in Europe. However, there are still many unknowns regarding Brexit and it may be inevitable that we may feel some ramifications as a result of what happens in Europe. That said, the entire logistics industry is already undergoing massive change as a result of new technologies and customer demand for improved services and value, and the challenges posed by Brexit could be a driver for developing new services, systems and processes that will take the industry to the next stage of its evolution.

Challenges to be solved

If no mutual agreement is reached between the UK and the EU with regards to Brexit, World Trade Organisation rules would come into effect. Obviously, this means VAT and duties may be applied, driving up import/export costs and resulting in more onerous custom requirements and border checks for freight-forwarders. The resulting bottlenecks could increase lead times and impact service levels.

Again, this won’t affect the Australian business, but the manufacturing model could change in Europe. Germany is currently the powerhouse of Europe when it comes to manufacturing and Röhlig has a significant presence there. After Brexit, the UK may need to replace the manufacturing capacity of Germany. One solution might be to import more from China, but due to the distance involved, this would mean significantly longer lead times. Furthermore, the industries in Europe and the UK are agile and already work well together, so the ideal solution will be to adjust to the new model after Brexit.

Consumables could be a problem due to border delays. The UK is the biggest market for Danish bacon, so that relationship may change. Potentially, Denmark could look for different markets if it becomes too difficult to export into the UK. Specifically, for logistics
firms, when you’re transporting goods across borders, your clients expect and rely on you to manage all the issues associated with international trade. They don’t want cargo delayed because of missing documents or border checks. It’s our job as freight forwarders to create systems to get around that, anticipate what could go wrong and put in place contingency plans to deal with any changes to trade borders or import/export rules.

Technology provides solutions

The logistics industry is already solving problems like this using technology. Take the US, for example, a highly regulated country, just like Australia and New Zealand, where customs clearance must be approved and completed by a licensed broker. The single market in Europe means you don’t need that. But, in the US, it’s now all automated. That’s something we haven’t done in Australia and New Zealand yet, but we’re moving closer. Because of Brexit, it should happen in the UK much quicker and we’ll be able to learn from that when it comes to implementing the technology in other markets. In fact, it’s possible to imagine a scenario whereby Brexit will accelerate the digitalization of customs, so it becomes seamless to move consignments across any land border.

Investing in people

Beyond that, we need to invest in people and knowledge to solve challenges like Brexit. By doing so, we create new innovations and develop future leaders for the industry. That means encouraging employees at every level to be creative and bring new ideas to the table on how we, as an industry, can better service our customers. Right now, at Röhlig Australia, we have around 20 different such initiatives in place. Being part of an organization that has been around for 160 years, it’s good to break out of that traditional framework from time to time and these knowledge programs allow us to do that. It’s good for us and good for our customers. These are particularly relevant now given new technologies in the logistics arena and issues such as Brexit, because they examine issues relating to socio-political, economic and environmental factors, all of which have the potential to impact our industry. This is all from the Australian perspective, but you can see how they apply when mitigating for risks such as Brexit. Obviously, we can’t make decisions for clients, but we can advise them on the challenges and potential solutions. Software does that for us already, allowing us to post videos, educational videos and training videos to educate customers if we do experience problems.

Removing barriers to trade

Upon leaving the EU, the UK will have to create new trade agreements with EU companies. It’s very difficult to predict what these will be. Even though Australia is part of the commonwealth, most decisions taken in the UK won’t apply here, so theoretically, we should see very little effect. Existing and new supply chain contracts will need to be assessed. UK contracts referring to EU law or the need for access to the EU may need to be re-negotiated or amended. The rules regarding the import of some products, such as medicines, may change. However, any new barriers to trade will affect the structure of the supply chain. Product manufacturing may need to move closer to its ultimate destination. Companies may decide to store inventory more locally, and open new facilities for finished stock in various trading areas to overcome any obstacles to the movement of goods. Hopefully, much like Y2K, the challenges won’t be as insurmountable as they’re currently perceived.

Written by Thomas Hansen, Röhlig Australia and New Zealand
Impact of Brexit on Victoria

The foundation of our modern, industrialised global economy has been a multilateral commitment to free trade, open markets and the World Trade Organisation’s rules-based framework for trade and investment. Recently, the pillars of globalisation have been challenged, for example by the imposition of new United States tariffs and investment restrictions and the decision by the United Kingdom (UK) to withdraw from the European Union (EU). These actions represent an intensification of protectionism by countries that have traditionally strongly supported more open trade and investment markets.

Two years of uncertainty around Brexit has exacerbated a fall in business and investor confidence in UK markets. The latest 2017 McKinsey survey of executives shows there has been a decline in business confidence since the Brexit vote, with trade-related risks reported as the top threat to global growth. In 2017, net foreign investment flows in the UK were negative, partly reflecting a loss of confidence in the economy and a climate of risk aversion among investors. As Figure 1 shows, UK economic growth has slowed considerably, even prior to Brexit, making it especially vulnerable to further losses in business confidence and investment.

Impacts on Victoria: Our Relationship with the European Union

For the most part, Victoria has remained protected from the impacts of Brexit and more widespread increases in global protectionism. Victoria’s economy has been performing strongly and is entering its 27th consecutive year of growth. Exports of both goods and services continue to grow strongly. Services exports are performing especially well and now account for 45 per cent of total Victorian exports. International education has been driving the expansion of services exports, growing by 98 per cent over the last five years to reach $9.9 billion in 2017.

Victoria has a close and prosperous relationship with the UK, Germany and the EU. In 2017, two-way goods trade between Victoria and the UK was worth $2.4 billion, growing by more than 25 per cent over 5 years. Goods exports were worth $316 million, and imports $2.1 billion, reflecting a sizeable trade deficit. Key Victorian exports to the UK are wine, perfume and cosmetics, meat, pharmaceuticals and plastic products.

Victoria also has a strong reciprocal and growing trade relationship with Germany and the EU, with goods exports to the region in 2017 worth over $1.7 billion, and nearly $350 million of goods destined for Germany. Victorian goods exports to Germany are dominated by advanced manufacturing including pharmaceuticals, machinery and parts and scientific and medical equipment. This makes the German market a very important driver of growth for Victoria’s high value-added export industries.

Victoria has long been a destination of choice for investment from Germany to Australia. Understanding the benefits of investing in the State, companies such as Bosch, BMW, DB Engineering and Giesecke and Devrient have made important contributions to Victoria. More recently, the Government has helped to attract new investment by renewable energy firm, BayWa r.e, and retailers, Kapten and Son. The Government has also provided visa nominations to support German business owners and investors to establish and do business in Victoria.

The EU continues to represent a source of great future potential for Victoria’s highest value exporters and small to medium-sized businesses seeking to export for the first time. In the last five years, Victorian goods exports to the EU grew faster (7.7%) than exports to geographically closer regions such as the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) (5.1%).

Brexit is already helping to strengthen Victoria’s relationship with the EU and build on existing, strong ties with Germany. In 2017, Germany overtook the UK as Victoria’s top EU export market, with over 20 per cent of Victorian goods exports to the region destined for Germany. As growth slowed in the

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2 ABS International Trade in Goods and Services, Cat 5368.0
UK and business confidence waned, German demand surged, with Victorian goods exports grew by more than 30 per cent in the year to 2017. Advanced manufacturing businesses, in particular, are taking advantage of opportunities in Germany, with pharmaceutical exports growing by 333 per cent over the last decade, with these products now accounting for nearly 30 per cent of all Victorian goods exports to Germany. In 2017, collectively Germany, France, Belgium, and Italy received nearly 80 per cent of Victoria’s goods exports to the EU. Ensuring exports to these markets continue to grow will help shield Victorian export sectors reliant on the UK from some of the negative impacts of Brexit and enable Victoria’s relationship with countries such as Germany to continue to grow and strengthen.

Brexit is likely to also have an impact on Victoria’s services sectors, providing an opportunity to leverage our reputation as a world-class education provider and increase student numbers from Germany, Italy and elsewhere in the EU. For example, there are early signs that Brexit may be discouraging some European students from studying in the UK, with a recent report showing that the UK is poised to lose its position as the second most preferred study destination in favour of Australia. Victoria is well placed to offer a high-quality alternative to the UK for international students. In the last year, growth in student enrolments from Germany (11 per cent), Spain (20 per cent) and France (9 per cent) outstripped UK student enrolment growth (1.9 per cent) in Victoria. In the post-

Brexit environment, there is a potential opportunity for the Victorian Government and education providers to target promotion of the Victorian education offering to students in the EU. Current free trade agreement negotiations between Australia and the EU also offer a chance to further build our relationship, particularly for the food and fibre, professional services, international education and advanced manufacturing sectors.

The Victorian Government offers a wide range of services and programs to help exporters capitalise on opportunities in the EU, United States, China and other key markets. Victoria has 22 Trade and Investment offices, the most extensive international network of all the Australian states, including a Commissioner for the UK and Europe and offices in both Frankfurt and London. Global Victoria has a suite of export programs to help address the needs of firms at each stage of their export journey. Through the Export Skills Program, first time or small business exporters can access online training and seminars as well as workshops and briefings on specialist themes essential for international trading success. Other programs target first time and more established exporters, such as the Victorian Invitation Program (VIP), which helps link Victorian firms with potential export partners in markets such as the EU. For more information on Global Victoria’s export programs go to https://trade.vic.gov.au/for-exporters.

3: Centre for Global Higher Education at the UCL Institute of Education, University College London. 19 July 2018.
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EV2GO (electric vehicle to go) is a start-up business striving to be Australia’s first 100% electric scooter hire provider using the free-floating sharing model commencing its pilot project in March 2019 in Darwin NT.

Free-floating scooter sharing is an existing model of scooter hire in Europe and America. Drivers hire scooters for a short period of time, to get from Point A to Point B. EV2GO offers easy, fast, comfortable, sustainable and quiet travel.

High quality electric scooters, manufactured in Germany, will be used for the hire service. The German scooters will also be available for sale.

The Code Heroes are an Australian app development, design and marketing agency with an award-winning portfolio, specialising in mobile apps for enterprise with exceptional user experience at their core.

Typically, we are helping businesses:
- Create a unique value proposition by delivering services to customers when and where they want them (on the move).
- Access new markets by engaging with customers through new channels.
- Reduce costs, timeframes & errors by replacing paper-based systems with bespoke mobile apps solutions (perfect for mobile workforces).

Eppendorf is a leading life science company that develops and sells instruments, consumables, and services for liquid-, sample-, and cell handling in laboratories worldwide. Its product range includes pipettes and automated pipetting systems, dispensers, centrifuges, mixers, spectrometers, and DNA amplification equipment as well as ultra-low temperature freezers, fermenters, bioreactors, CO2 incubators, shakers, and cell manipulation systems. Consumables such as pipette tips, test tubes, microtiter plates, and single-use bioreactor vessels complement the range of highest-quality premium products.
Established in 1989, Guhring Australia has grown from a small sales company to one of Australia’s leading suppliers of precision cutting tools. Our subsidiary consists of the following departments:

Trade Department - Imports and distributes our standard range of precision cutting tools, made in Germany.

Service Division - With our in-house CNC Grinding machines and state of the art PVD Coating facility, the service division is in the position to manufacture & service special tools as per customer requirements.

Guhring's Tool Management division provides process planning, stock control, logistics, application support, tool maintenance and process optimization.

InterContinental Sydney was established more than 25 years ago within the sandstone facades of the historic 1851 Treasury building. The hotel boasts unique views of the world famous Sydney Harbour Bridge and Sydney Opera House, as well as across the Royal Botanic Gardens and out to Sydney's North Head. As the ultimate hotel of choice for visitors and locals alike, InterContinental Sydney offers leisure and business guests a series of delectable flavours from the Cortile, Cafe Opera and Club InterContinental venues.

Also showcasing 15 reimagined meetings and event rooms to suit a range of functions, the hotel is an ideal location for bringing visionary events to life. Guests of InterContinental Sydney can immerse themselves in majestic sunrises and sunsets from the hotel’s harbour view rooms or from the city’s only alfresco rooftop hotel lounge, Club InterContinental; internationally renowned as the world’s best. Some people visit Sydney’s icons, others stay in them.

Max Frank Australia Pty is focused on working with the Australian & New Zealand construction industries to introduce products and technologies to enhance current local construction methods.

A particular focus is the development of a greater awareness and need for improved concrete durability and the overall need to ensure the best possible asset life with lowest maintenance costs for all infrastructure projects. Primary product focus is on extruded fibre concrete spacers and distance tubes plus Zemdrain® CPF liners, Pecafil® and Stremaform®. The full range of the five MAX FRANK product lines: spacers, formwork technologies, reinforcement technologies, sealing technologies and sound insulation are available for the local construction industry from our local warehouses located in Brisbane and Sydney.

Max Frank understands the obstacles companies face in Australia, especially when it comes to keeping overheads low without any sacrifice on innovation and production. To complement our trusted specialist recruitment services, we also offer clients qualified contractor secondment for clients with short term projects without headcount allocation or resources to purchase expensive software. Because we use the same kind of talent for our day-to-day business, we understand the calibre our clients are looking for and have the ability to procure the brightest talent.

Millsom are one of Australia’s leading supplier of cranes, hoists, vacuum lifting systems, vacuum components and materials handling solutions. Through our reliable service you can buy vacuum lifting equipment including carton and sack vacuum lifters, sheet lifters for timber and steel and more with the expectation of quality products and affordable prices.

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Productsup is a powerful, intelligent and easy-to-use platform for product content integration, syndication and feed management. With no coding needed, the cloud-based SaaS solution empowers the business user to assess channel readiness, transform, optimise and distribute high quality product content to thousands of retailers, data pools, marketplaces and marketing channels, such as Amazon, Google, Facebook or Walmart.

With agile data and connectivity, Productsup enables clients to do more business, stay ahead of competition in an ever changing and complex market environment and capture new opportunities as they happen.

The company has more than 10 industry award wins to date and outstanding customer testimonials. Major partners include Google, Marin Software, SAP Hybris, IBM and Keshoo.

Titomic (ASX:TTT) is headquartered in Melbourne, Australia. The company overcomes limitations of previous additive manufacturing (3D printing). Titomic’s uses breakthrough technology (“Titomic Kinetic Fusion”) in cold spray of titanium or titanium alloy particles to build complex parts without shape or size constraints at fast and large production scale.

Titomic offers design and manufacturing processes to enable speed-to-market, superior products at lower production costs and a more sustainable future. Titomic focuses in R&D for continuous improvement in new material sciences and manufacturing systems and processes to bring best customer competitive advantages.

Titomic covers industries such as oil & gas, aerospace, defence, sporting goods, medical, automotive, industrial equipment, construction and marine.

The Energy Network (TEN) is a specialised supplier of tooling and equipment for the construction and maintenance of electrical networks. We reach the Utility, Rail, Mining, Oil and Gas, Manufacturing and Major Infrastructure markets.

We import and distribute products exclusively in Australia for a number of leading global brands. Our product ranges cover Hydraulic Crimping, Cutting and Punching Tooling, Connection fittings such as Lugs and Links, Specialised Safety equipment including Arc flash and rubber insulating products, and a wide range of cable installation products.

The Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry is the peak body for business in Victoria, informing and servicing more than 15,000 members, customers and clients around the State.

Our focus is on leading business into the future. We are committed to being the voice for business, representing and championing our members in a difficult regulatory environment.

Our success over more than 160 years is built on consistently providing leadership, information, representation and networking opportunities to businesses across the State.

Our members and clients are our priority and we are committed to providing them with service excellence at every interaction.

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