

Paul Howorth

LLM (International Law),
BPD(Hons)

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INDEPENDENT ADVISOR TRADE IN PROFESSIONAL & REGULATED SERVICES



Qualifications

Master of Laws specialising in International Law

Australian National University, 2011

Barrister

Queensland and High Court of Australia, 2002

Bachelor of Laws

Monash University, 2001

Bachelor of Planning and Design (Honours)

University of Melbourne, 1996

Bio

I am an independent advisor, specialising in trade in professional and other regulated services. I provide knowledge, advice, advocacy and practical guidance on developing and using trade law, policies, agreements, and frameworks to facilitate free and fair trade and investment in professional and other regulated services in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

As an experienced international lawyer, researcher and facilitator, I have a particular focus on emerging trends and practices in trade and investment, including the use of technology and other innovations in trade facilitation, funding and financing to support market growth and development.

Since 2020, I have been a leading advisor and contributor to the Australian APEC Study Centre's work program for the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade on the mutual recognition of professional services in the APEC region. I have led the design and development of several key mutual recognition resources for the Asia-Pacific region including:

- The APEC MRAs Community of Practice
- The APEC MRAs Inventory
- A consolidated online website and resource for mutual recognition practice in the APEC region
- An MRAs Toolkit for the APEC Region
- An Online Training Course for MRAs and Digitalisation

I am also a contributing author on several policy papers addressing services trade facilitation and digitalisation in the Asia-Pacific, including *Mutual Recognition of Professional Services: Promoting more open and integrated services for the region's prosperity*, Policy Brief for PECC Signature Project: FTAAP Pathways to Prosperity.

I have regularly facilitated and moderated mutual recognition, professional services and services trade workshops, panels and interventions for the APEC Group on Services at APEC Senior Official Meetings, across the Asia-Pacific. I am also a leading contributor to the design and development of the ASEAN Services Facilitation Framework Implementation Plan, for the International Trade Centre.

Other areas of trade, investment and development focus in my career include indigenous development, regional development, impact investment and other supports for MSMEs in Africa, Asia, and Australia.

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Recent Project Highlights

Facilitation of the FTAAP Dialogue on Competition Policy, APEC SOM2, China, 2026

I led the design of and facilitated the Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific Dialogue on Competition Policy for the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Development of the ASEAN Services Facilitation Framework (ASFF) Implementation Plan, 2026

I am a supporting expert and lead writer on the development of the ASFF refreshed Implementation Plan to drive improved services trade facilitation and growth for ASEAN.

Development of FTAAP services toolkits, PECC FTAAP Pathways to Prosperity Project, 2025-2026

I am developing services facilitation toolkits for the Pathway to Prosperity Project, focussing on digital transformation in services trade and good regulatory practice, and professional services and mutual recognition

Presentation to the WTO on Professional Services and Mutual Recognition in APEC, October 2025

With the Australian APEC Study Centre and on behalf of the Australian Government, I co-presented an update on *Professional Services and Mutual Recognition in APEC* for the WTO's CTS Thematic Session on Recognition of Professional Qualifications.

Designer and Lead Facilitator, APEC Mutual Recognition of Professional Services Community of Practice, Australian APEC Study Centre, 2022-2025

I was the designer and lead facilitator of the APEC Mutual Recognition of Professional Services Community of Practice (MRA CoP). The objective of the MRA CoP is to foster the sharing of knowledge and experience of mutual recognition efforts and trends in the APEC region. To date, 14 online sessions have been held across a diverse range of themes relevant to current practice.

GOS: EC-GOS Joint Workshop on Services and Structural Reform, APEC SOM3, Korea, August 2025

At this workshop, Paul designed and facilitated a panel session on *Mutual recognition in a transforming services trade landscape*, exploring the future of mutual recognition of professional and other regulated services as technological transformation of the services trade environment accelerates. The opportunities and challenges for developing economies were a particular focus.

Mutual Recognition in South-East Asia Readiness Assessment and Opportunities Mapping, Australian APEC Study Centre, 2025

I am a contributing author and researcher for the identification of potential opportunities for new MRAs across Southeast Asia. This work is gathering and analysing national level services trade and investment data across multiple professional and other regulated services sectors for 11 SEA countries. The aim of this research is to inform areas of future focus and effort for the Australia-led MRA making in the region.

Mutual recognition of professional services in APEC for the digital era – looking back and moving forward, Australian APEC Study Centre, 2025

I was a contributing author and researcher for a paper exploring the impacts so far of APEC's mutual recognition efforts since 1995, and the emerging future as the services trade environment transforms in the digital and AI era.

GOS Workshop: Professional Services and Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs): Exploring opportunities and challenges for Professional Services Mutual Recognition in APEC APEC SOM 1, Peru, 2024

I designed and facilitated this workshop focused on exploring opportunities and challenges for furthering mutual recognition in the APEC region, with the objective of highlighting where further policy work may be required to advance mutual recognition.

Design and development of an online home for Professional Services Mutual Recognition Agreements in the APEC region, Australian APEC Study Centre 2024

I led the design and supported the development of an online home to compile and share practical resources for professional services mutual recognition in the APEC region.

Design and Development of an Online Course on Digital Credentials and the Mutual Recognition of Professional Services, Australian APEC Study Centre 2023

I led the design and supported the development of an online training course on *Digital Credentials and the Mutual Recognition of Professional Services* for the APEC region. The Online Course is designed to assist participants in building the capabilities and capacity to drive the acceleration of mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) within and between economies; and to develop digital platforms that support more efficient mutual recognition practices.

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Design and Development of the MRA Toolkit; A Practical Resource to Support Professional Services Mutual Recognition in the APEC Region, Australian APEC Study Centre 2023

I led the design and development of the *MRA Toolkit; A Practical Resource to Support Professional Services Mutual Recognition in the APEC Region*. The *Toolkit* is a practical resource to support professional services mutual recognition activities in the APEC region. The *Toolkit* provides practical guidance and examples on all topics and issues central to mutual recognition, from agreement-making to implementation. It is a useful reference for both experienced and new practitioners in the mutual recognition of professional services field.

GOS Plenary: Intervening remarks on the Mutual Recognition of Qualifications and Licensing in APEC, APEC SOM 1 2023, USA

On behalf of the Australian Government, leading GOS work on Mutual Recognition of Qualifications and Licensing in APEC, I prepared and made intervening remarks to update GOS on progress and future developments.

GOS Workshop: Key principles and lessons in negotiating Mutual Recognition Agreements, APEC MRA Community of Practice, in-person session, APEC SOM 1 2023, USA

I designed and facilitated an in-person APEC MRAs Community of Practice session and panel on the theme of *Key principles and lessons in negotiating Mutual Recognition Agreements*.

GOS Workshop: APEC Services Competitiveness Roadmap Annual Dialogue, APEC SOM 2 2023, USA

I was a panellist on the *Interconnected Professional Services* segment of this workshop and addressed a possible digital future for the APEC mutual recognition environment.

APEC Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific (FTAAP) Work Program: Consultative Workshop on Trade and Inclusion, APEC SOM 2 2023

I was the moderator of this workshop and panel session, which focussed on the challenges and opportunities for trade and inclusion, with a particular focus on services trade.

GOS Plenary: Intervening remarks on the Mutual Recognition of Qualifications and Licensing in APEC, APEC SOM 3 2022, Thailand

On behalf of the Australian Government, leading GOS work on Mutual Recognition of Qualifications and Licensing in APEC, I prepared and made intervening remarks to update GOS on progress and future developments.

GOS Workshop: Services Discipline Reforms and Good Regulatory Practices, APEC SOM 3 2022, Thailand

I moderated a workshop and panel session on the Joint initiative on Services Domestic Regulation and good regulatory practices across the globe.

Digital Credentialling and the Mutual Recognition of Professional Services, Australian APEC Study Centre, 2020-2021

I designed and presented a series of webinars exploring the potential for using digital credentials and the digital environment generally to support and enhance mutual recognition processes.