

23 January 2026

(26-0501)

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Committee on Safeguards

Original: English

**NOTIFICATION UNDER ARTICLE 12.1(A) OF THE AGREEMENT ON
SAFEGUARDS ON INITIATION OF AN INVESTIGATION AND
THE REASONS FOR IT**

AUSTRALIA

Fabricated structural steel

The following communication, dated and received on 23 January 2026, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Australia.

Pursuant to Article 12.1(a) of the WTO Agreement on Safeguards (Safeguards Agreement), Australia notifies that a safeguards investigation has been initiated as follows.

1. Specify the date when the investigation was initiated

23 January 2026.

The investigation was initiated and referred to the Productivity Commission (PC), which is Australia's competent authority, on 23 January 2026. Australia's safeguard procedures were notified to the WTO in document [G/SG/N/1/AUS/2](#) dated 2 July 1998 and [G/SG/N/1/AUS/2/Suppl.1](#) dated 16 December 2005.

The Terms of Reference for the inquiry are at Attachment A. Those WTO Members having a significant interest as exporters of the product concerned were advised by letter.

If the PC determines that the conditions to impose a safeguard measure are met, the PC will make a recommendation to the Treasurer of Australia. A final report by the PC is to be provided to the Treasurer within ten months of initiation/referral.

An interim report will be issued within eight months of initiation/referral, on whether critical circumstances exist where delay in applying measures would cause damage which it would be difficult to repair. If such circumstances exist, then pursuant to Article 6 of the Safeguards Agreement, the PC may also recommend provisional safeguard measures would be appropriate.

New Zealand and Singapore are excluded from safeguard action under the Australia-New Zealand Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement and the Singapore-Australia Free Trade Agreement. Singapore and New Zealand will be excluded from the entirety of the investigation, including the injury assessment. Australia will also take into account any relevant commitments in its other bilateral and plurilateral free trade agreements, where appropriate.

2. Provide the precise description of the product involved

Fabricated structural steel.

Fabricated structural steel (FSS) products falling within the tariff subheadings of 7308.10 and 7308.90 of the Australian Customs Tariff. Please refer to the Terms of Reference for the inquiry for the full list.

HS code(s): 730810, 730890.

3. Provide the reasons for the initiation of the investigation, for example:

- (i) Was the investigation initiated pursuant to a petition from the domestic industry?**
- (ii) Evidence on the basis of which the investigation was initiated.**
- (iii) Evidence, if any, of critical circumstances where delay would cause damage which it would be difficult to repair.**

The investigation was initiated pursuant to an application from Australia's domestic industry.

The evidence submitted by the applicants indicates that total imports of the FSS products concerned increased 38.7%, from 389,169 to 539,649 tonnes, in the period from 2020 to 2024. There was a marked increase in imports in 2021 when levels reached 483,577 tonnes, after which they have remained significantly elevated.

The evidence also indicates there has been a substantial rise in the penetration of imports into the Australian market in terms of their share of domestic supply, rising across financial years (1 July to 30 June) from 15% in 2020-21 to 26% in 2022-23. In addition, the import unit prices of FSS have consistently been lower than 50% to 70% of the global average price between 2020 and 2023.

The evidence suggests this increase in imports is the result of unforeseen developments, including trade defence measures adopted by third parties and an environment of global overcapacity in steelmaking.

There is evidence from the applicants that this sustained import volume and price pressure is causing or threatening to cause significant overall impairment in the position of Australia's domestic industry. In particular, Australian production of FSS has fallen as a share of supply from 2021 to 2023 and declined 12% in absolute terms - from 744,000 tonnes in 2023 to 659,000 tonnes in 2024.

4. Provide a point of contact for the investigation and identify the preferred means for corresponding. The point of contact would be available to respond to enquiries relating to the procedures applicable to the investigation.

The first circular/issues paper by the PC will provide information on how interested parties can participate in the investigation. The paper will include the dates for submissions by interested parties and will be distributed and made available on the PC's website: <https://www.pc.gov.au>.

Interested parties are invited to make submissions and register an interest in the inquiry, in due course.

5. Provide the deadlines and procedures for importers, exporters and other interested parties to present evidence and their views, including: (i) deadlines and procedures for Members and exporters to identify themselves as interested parties, if so required, to participate in the investigation, and (ii) the date of an intended public hearing as provided for in Article 3.1. Note: At the time of the initiation, if the authority has not decided whether or not to hold such a hearing, or if the date of the hearing is undetermined, Members should indicate under this item how such information would be publicized. Members are not obliged to submit another notification simply due to the fact that the proposed date has subsequently been changed.

The timing and location of public hearings has not yet been determined by the PC. The PC will make this information available through its website (as above), and it will be publicly and prominently

advertised to facilitate widespread participation in accordance with the Productivity Commission Act 1998.

Additional information

Members are encouraged to attach, in an electronic form, publicly available document(s) containing the relevant decision(s) made by the competent authority. This document may be in the original language of the Member, even when the language is not one of the official languages of the WTO. The document will neither be translated nor circulated to the Committee, but will be made available by the Secretariat to Members requesting it.

A. Terms of Reference to the Productivity Commission.¹

¹ A copy has been submitted electronically, and is available from the WTO Secretariat. To consult it, please contact Ms Anne Richards of the Rules Division (anne.richards@wto.org). It is also available on the [WTO Safeguards Notification Portal](#).