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General Review of the China–Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA)

— Submission on the Medical Technology Sector

Purpose

Medical Technology (MedTech) is a strategically important sector in which strengthening bilateral trade access delivers both economic and public health benefits. This submission provides a focused assessment of ChAFTA from a MedTech perspective. It evaluates practical achievements over the past decade, identifies possible challenges to trade and investment, and proposes targeted improvements to enhance trade and market access.

Experience to Date

ChAFTA has delivered clear benefits through tariff liberalisation and strengthened bilateral engagement. Yet in the rapidly evolving MedTech sector, tariffs may no longer be the primary determinant of market access. Factors like regulatory processes, IP protection and data compliance, as well as procurement systems become more significant to ensure fair and efficient market access.

Suggestions

- (1) Strengthen Regulatory Alignment** — Advance mutual recognition with trusted regulators (e.g. TGA & NMPA), reduce duplicative requirements, and improve transparency, predictability and approval timelines under the regulatory authorities.
- (2) Enhance IP and Data Protection** — Strengthen intellectual property safeguards and regulatory data security.
- (3) Improve Market Access Mechanisms** — Promote fair and transparent procurement, support cross-border innovation and SME participation.
- (4) Establish Modern Frameworks for Digital Health** — including AI and cross-border clinical data governance.

These reforms would improve market access, support investment, accelerate adoption of medical innovation, and deliver improved healthcare outcomes in both Australia and China.

About Uscom

Uscom is an Australian MedTech company specialising in non-invasive cardiovascular, pulmonary and haemodynamic monitoring, and the global distribution of clinically validated diagnostic devices across over 50 countries and regions. The company has direct operational experience across Australian and international regulatory systems, substantially in China.

Submitted by Uscom

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