Britain has completed the first round of negotiations for a Free-Trade Agreement (FTA) with Australia, as the UK looks to ratify agreements with nations around the world - including Japan and the US. International Trade Secretary Liz Truss said the UK was “one step closer to an ambitious” deal with Australia which would help to bring investment, better jobs, higher wages and lower prices.

In a statement following the virtual talks, Ms Truss added: “Discussions between negotiators were productive and reflected our shared ambition to secure a comprehensive deal to boost trade and investment between our like-minded economies.

“Teams discussed their respective objectives and agreed a forward plan for future talks.

Our positive discussions in round one have laid the groundwork for the UK and Australia to achieve high-quality outcomes across the agreement.”

This comes as Cabinet Office Minister Michel Gove unveiled a 230-page blueprint for Britain becoming an independent nation beyond the Brexit transition period, including a new state-of-the-art border to keep the UK safe.
Michael Gove has outlined a £700million package for new infrastructure, the hiring of staff and advanced technology at the UK border as Britain begins to take back control.

The new border control will be built inland where there is no space at ports and contain up to 12 new sites.

The blueprint also outlines new regulations on the trading of goods from the EU as the UK prepares to formally leave the single market and customs union at the end of the year.

Cabinet Office Minister Michael Gove said: "The publication of the border operating model is an important step which gives business the certainty and direction they need to prepare for the end of the transition period when the UK becomes an independent trading nation for the first time in nearly 50 years.

"We are committed to working closely with businesses and the border industry to help deliver not just a fully operational border at the end of the transition period, but also the world's most effective and secure border in the world by 2025.”

6.15pm update: Frost to take NEW approach to pile pressure on Barnier in bid for summer Brexit deal

Boris Johnson’s chief European negotiator will push Brussels for an "outline" of a free-trade agreement to end months of bitter wrangling to finally secure a Brexit deal by the end of the summer.
Ahead of the latest round of talks, David Frost is planning to further intensify negotiations with EU counterpart Michel Barnier amid fears the bloc is still dragging its feet.

The pair will meet in Brussels tomorrow for the third time in as many weeks as part of the transformed timetable for post-Brexit talks. Discussions will take place at the European Commission’s Berlamont headquarters between Wednesday and Friday. British negotiators are hoping to overcome their “significant differences” with the bloc in order to finally deliver a breakthrough.
Mr Frost could even table a brand-new trade proposal containing a list of "political trade-offs" needed to reach an agreement, European sources have claimed.

A "blue belt" of Marine Protected Areas should be created around the UK to restore depleted fish stocks, according to scientists (Image: GETTY)

5pm update: Former Brexit Party MEP hits out at EU over fishing
Ex-Brexit Party MEP Ben Habib tweeted: "The truth is the EU is not seeking a deal on fishing. It is seeking to annex our waters. It is treating us like a vassal state."

It comes after Mr Habib told Express.co.uk the UK and EU are not making enough progress in trade talks and warned Brussels is not giving enough ground on fishing, which has proved a major sticking points in negotiations.

3.30pm update: Scientists call for ‘blue belt’ area to restore UK fish stocks post-Brexit

A "blue belt" of Marine Protected Areas should be created around the UK to restore depleted fish stocks, according to scientists.
Researchers at the University of Southampton, the GEOMAR Helmholtz Cntre for Ocean Research and the University of British Colombia say Britain leaving the EU’s Common Fisheries Policy combined with reduced fishing during the coronavirus pandemic offers the chance to develop new policies focused on sustainability.

Daniel Pauly, from the University of British Columbia, said: "The opportunity to do this is now because of the slowdown caused by Covid-19 and because after Brexit, the UK will be in a position to insist in its negotiations with the EU that fishing quotas advised by scientists not be exceeded."

"The establishment of MPAs is one of the most cost-effective ways to restore over-exploited stocks and habitats on which fish depend, to the mutual benefit of the fishing industry who experience increased catches in grounds immediately outside of MPAs."

Nicola Sturgeon has criticised post-Brexit visa plans (Image: PA)
1.40pm update: Ryanair cuts up to 1,000 flights as Ireland keeps quarantine measures for EU visitors

Ryanair has announced it will remove up to 1,000 flights from its UK-Ireland routes in August and September as Ireland "maintains a defective quarantine restriction on EU visitors".

The airline said in a statement: "Last week when the UK and Northern Ireland removed travel restrictions on short-haul flights to/from the European Union, Ireland became the only country in the EU with a blanket 14-day quarantine restriction on all arrivals from EU countries, most of which have lower Covid case rates than Ireland.

"Air travel between Ireland and the UK is being badly damaged by this ineffective 14-day quarantine.

"Ryanair will significantly reduce its flights between Ireland and the UK in August and September, to reflect this suppressed demand."

12.30pm update: Sturgeon calls on Boris to reverse post-Brexit visa plans

Nicola Sturgeon has called on Boris Johnson to reverse his decision and include social care workers in the post-Brexit health and care visa immigration plans.

The SNP leader said: "The entire country is extremely grateful to you for everything you do.

"And today, let me be very clear that that includes the care home staff who do us the honour of coming to Scotland from overseas to work here, including the 6 to 8 percent of our care home workers who come from other countries within the European Union.

"In my view, it is essential that care home workers are included in any scheme for post-Brexit work visas."
"The Scottish Government will continue to make strong representations on that point to the UK Government."

12.00pm update: Economist says GDP contraction underestimated amid no deal Brexit fears

Britain’s economy could contract further because the markets have not taken into consideration the possibility of the UK leaving the EU without a trade deal, an economist has warned.

The pound fell towards the $1.25 mark and reached a two-week low against the euro after new data showed the economy was recovering more slowly than forecast.

The Office for National Statistics found GDP rose by 1.8 percent in May after falling by a record 20.8 percent in April.

Colin Asher, senior economist at Mizuho Corporate Bank said: "My feeling is the market is not fully pricing in the likelihood of a hard Brexit.

"There has been very little progress on negotiations and even if there is a deal, there's not much time to put a lot in it."

11.10am update: Britain begins Brexit trade talks with Australia

The UK has begun trade the first round of Brexit trade talks with Australia.

International Trade Secretary Liz Truss said the discussions were “productive” and was confident the foundations had been laid for “high-quality outcomes”.

In a statement, Ms Truss said: “Discussions between negotiators were productive and reflected our shared ambition to secure a comprehensive deal to boost trade and investment between our like-minded economies.

“Teams discussed their respective objectives and agreed a forward plan for future talks."
“Our positive discussions in round one have laid the groundwork for the UK and Australia to achieve high-quality outcomes across the agreement.

10.30am update: Election POLL: Who would you vote for if there was a general election today? VOTE HERE

9.40am update: Lib Dem leader lashes out at Brexit costs

Sir Ed Davey, the acting leader of the Liberal Democrats, has warned the Government’s latest Brexit plans would be a “disaster” for the UK economy. An extra 400 million customs declarations could have to be issued a year under new post-Brexit border controls, worth a reported £7billion. Sir Ed wrote on Twitter: “This Tory Brexit ‘tax’ will cost British firms exporting £7 billion a year.

“With jobs losses rising, this will be a disaster for our economy.
“Take back control = tax business more.”

9.00am update: Sturgeon makes independence threat to Boris Johnson after new post-Brexit trade bill

Nicola Sturgeon has clashed with Boris Johnson over his post-Brexit plans.

The Prime Minister is set to publish legislation in order to create an internal market in the UK following Brexit.

Under this agreement, the devolved nations would need to accept standards on food, the environment and animal welfare following the end of the Brexit transition period.

Nicola Sturgeon said: “This would be a full-scale assault on devolution, a blatant move to erode the powers of the Scottish parliament in key areas.

“If the Tories want to further boost support for independence, this is the way to do it.”

8.25am update: Ireland issues no deal warning
Ireland’s foreign affairs minister Simon Coveney has issued a warning over the possibility of no trade deal being reached between the UK and the EU.

Simon Coveney said if the stalemate continues in Brexit trade talks it would be an “extraordinary failing of politics”.

Mr Coveney said: “There are more discussions happening this week and we hope the UK will adapt its approach to the commitment that they gave in the political declaration that they have moved away from since these negotiations began so we can try to put the pieces of this agreement in place.

"Hopefully by the end of September or October to ensure we avoid the consequences of a no deal trade Brexit which would be an enormous act of self-harm, but also an extraordinary failing of politics if we were, at the start of next year, trading on the basis of WTO regulations which would include tariffs on certain products."

Additional reporting by Luke Hawker.