

Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Senate inquiry into the Commonwealth's treaty-making process

Dear Senate Committee

I am writing with respect to the Senate inquiry into the Commonwealth's treaty-making process. In particular I refer to items *a*, *b*, *h* and *j* in the inquiry's terms of reference.

a. I submit that international treaties, in particular those classed as trade agreements, be voted on by Parliament. The full text of agreements *must always* be openly debated with opportunity for public review prior to signing. Further, the Parliament and Executive should retain power to withdraw from agreements with no penalty, should unforeseen interference with domestic law arise – or in the case of unforeseen claims against Australia for upholding democratically-decided principles.

b. It is essential that parliamentary committees, if established, are given access to the complete text of any treaties to examine and report upon.

h. With specific reference to the Trans-Pacific Partnership, current processes for stakeholder and public consultation are incredibly poor – and there is an apparent if not real lack any transparency or accountability. I submit that this type of negotiation leaves open clear financial, social and environmental risks to Australia, and refer to my comments on items *a* and *b*.

j. I submit that any agreement should include fair trade principles, including labour and environmental standards. This not only protects Australian workers and ecological resources, but potentially benefits all trading partners.

Thankyou for the opportunity to make a submission.

Adam.