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Chief Executive Officer:
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Our Ref: G-4-90

Friday 17 April 2009

The Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
Suite R1-109
Parliament House
PO Box 6021
Canberra ACT 2600
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Dear Secretary

Agreement establishing the ASEAN – Australia – New Zealand free trade area

Universities Australia supports the Australian Government's efforts in multilateral trade negotiation, but acknowledges that in the face of continued delays in progressing the Doha Round, that bilateral FTAs represent a necessary way to progress trade liberalisation in the short to medium term. To that end, Universities Australia supports Australia's being a party to the Agreement establishing the ASEAN – Australia – New Zealand free trade area.

Universities Australia considers it important to define clearly the position of higher education in Australia's trade policy on education so that benefit to the sector and to the nation can best be enhanced. While there is no separate chapter on education, it is pleasing to see specific service commitments in education services included in the annexes. Most particularly we welcome the Indonesian commitment to allowing foreign education suppliers, though in cooperation with local partners, to establish outside of Jakarta, in the cities of Surabaya, Bandung, Yogyakarta and Medan and the Malaysian commitment to enhancing temporary entry for higher education lecturers.

Universities Australia would welcome the opportunity to contribute to further consultations during the period of review. If you have any questions or comments regarding the preceding material, please feel free to contact me by telephone (02) 6285 2104 or email: glenn.withers@universitiesaustralia.edu.au.

Yours sincerely

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Chief Executive Officer

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