



15 February 2018

Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Via email: jsct@aph.gov.au

Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus

I am writing on behalf of the Australian red meat and livestock industry¹ in response to the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties inquiry into the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus and associated side letter (Nuku'alofa, 14 June 2017).

Our industry is supportive of PACER Plus, given the potential market access gains. Whilst PACER Plus is primarily focused on trade capacity-building and trade development assistance, upon entry into force the agreement has the potential to initiate future elimination of import tariffs for our industry's products in various member countries.

Unfortunately, two priority countries identified by the red meat industry (based on prior and future trade performance), were Papua New Guinea and Fiji – neither of which are signatories to the current agreement.

Industry sought elimination of import tariffs of 10% for beef in Papua New Guinea and 15% for beef, sheepmeat and goat meat in Fiji, along with harmonisation of import regimes. The potential value of PACER Plus would be significantly enhanced via the inclusion of these two countries, and as such, the red meat industry strongly advocates that every effort be pursued to secure their incorporation.

The ratification of a comprehensive PACER Plus agreement will not only create ongoing opportunities for our industry, but importantly, will facilitate reliable access to a wider range of red meat products for consumers in Forum Island Countries – thereby satisfying food demand (and food security objectives) which cannot be satisfied by domestic production alone.

Based on the official PACER Plus text, associated tariff liberalisation schedules and side letter, the Australian red meat and livestock industry recommends that the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties endorses PACER Plus and that binding treaty action be taken without delay.

Yours sincerely


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¹ Red Meat Advisory Council; Australian Livestock Exporters' Council; Australian Lot Feeders' Association; Australian Meat Industry Council; Cattle Council of Australia; Goat Industry Council of Australia; Sheep Producers Australia