

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this submission as I feel very strongly about the impact of the changes implied in the Terms of Reference with regard to the Commonwealth's treaty making processes. Under the Terms of Reference, I am specifically concerned about item 'h':

"the current processes for public and stakeholder consultation and opportunities for greater openness, transparency and accountability in negotiating treaties".

As I understand it, Government's around the world are, right now, meeting to discuss and negotiate Australia's largest trade treaty ever. Under these negotiations, the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP) will give corporations the power to sue our government for decisions they claim impact their investments and, more specifically, their profitability.

Countries involved in this treaty are: Canada, United States of America, Mexico, Peru, Chile, New Zealand, Australia, Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam and Japan. We know that there is bi-partisan opposition to this deal already in the U.S. Congress, specifically the fast tracking of negotiations.

The purpose of this 'fast tracking' is so that people from these countries are not provided with the opportunity to have their say in this negotiation process. It is my understanding that this dubious action lies in the belly of this senate inquiry and the terms of reference supporting it. This undemocratic and secretive deal must be brought to light so that people around the world can determine what the risks are and how it weakens their rights. The lack of transparency with regard to the TPP and any future trade deals is a real threat to our democracy.

I implore you to strongly consider the impacts, both long and short term, any hindrance to openness and transparency created by new terms in trade, particularly in light of the growing number of bilateral and multilateral trade agreements, has on our way of life.

I look forward, in anticipation of a thorough examination, to meaningful and prosperous outcomes of this inquiry, for the whole of Australia.

Kind Regards,
Mike Scott.