

The Chairman,
Inquiry into Australia's Trade Agreement Process,
Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee,
Dept. of the Senate,
Parliament House,
CANBERRA. ACT. 2600

We are writing this submission to your inquiry as we have several concerns about the way in which Australia's trade treaties are negotiated in secret and become the law without input from members of our Parliament.

They do not protect the basic rights of our country's citizens. Commercial enterprises in other countries can take legal action against our democratically elected Local, State and Federal Governments, if they feel that our country's right to legislate on environmental or cultural matters may affect their profits (as we have seen with Australia's "plain packaging of cigarettes" laws).

Tariffs and import duties are valid issues for such agreements, but not reasonably priced access to medicine (which everyone knows the big international pharmaceutical companies are keen to limit), copyright, and other cultural matters. There must be public debate on all these issues.

Yours sincerely,

Anne and Bill Byrne.