

AUSFTA Submission No:78.....

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To the secretary of JSCT

BY:

I hereby object to Australia entering a free trade agreement with the US. The reasons to my objections are in agreeance with those presented in the text, "Ten Devils in the Detail", published by AFTINET.

In particular I am concerned with the proceses and procedures for regulation of quarantine and GE regulation which gives a formal role in Australia's policy ensuring that trade obligations to the US will be high on the list. The US has already challenged EU labelling through the UTO and identified Australian labelling laws as a barrier to trade. Australian quarantine regulations should be made on a scientific basis and not part of a trade format.

Secondly, Australian farmers will not gain as predicted, the US sugar market is exempted from tariff reductions and beef dairy tariffs is to be phased out over 18 years.

Thirdly, the dispute protocol of USFTA will limit democratic process and that enables a government to claim a law or policy of the other country in breach of USFTA. If an issue is not resolved then a panel of trade law experts are engaged and the hearing is not guaranteed to be made public. This is a concern in itself, but further, trade law will be used to challenge social regulation, which is inconsistent with the agreement.

Higher costs for medicines as the USFTA gives drug companies the opportunity to influence the PBS committee before it's ultimate decision. Drug companies would use any opportunity to exploit the market backed by it's huge resources, the bottom line being the Australian public would be collared with 300% rise in prices.

Extension of copyright laws means higher costs for libraries and government and private education bodies, but the more insidious implication is that Australia and other countries would be governed more by US copyright law and have absolutely no autonomy of it's own.

Less rights to regulate essential services, with the possible consquence of the view the entire strategy and protocols of each infrastructure will have to be stripped down and reorganised, leading to unworkable rules and regulations governing recruitment. Working conditions and work place rights and delivery of each essential service in public and private sectors will be at the mercy of US corporate practise of, "down-sizing" and other counter-productive, negative activities.

Restrictions on Australian content rules on new media have a pungent aroma of an overriding US hegemony, as much of the material aired on Australian TV originated in the US and will only worsen, with Australia destined to become what it is already being regarded as, and that is a just another annexe of the US.

Restrictions and regulations of investment and services is an anachronism, as any investment in Australian property is either directly or indirectly influenced by the fluctuating US dollar and any investment in Australia in modern times is connected with US investment legislation.

In summary, there is no such thing as a free trade agreement for Australia or any other country that opts to enter such an agreement with the US, and exercise my right to vehemently oppose such a ludicrous exercise in legislated exploitation.

Yours faithfully



Vivian Miles