

Sharon Hutchings

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Committee Secretary  
Senate Economics Committee  
Department of the Senate  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Submission on  
**The Trade Practices Amendment (Small Business Protection) Bill 2007**

I wish to express my opposition to the proposed amendments contained in the abovementioned Bill that will specifically provide the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) with the power to take representative action against groups that call for consumers not to buy products on ethical grounds.

This is the kind of proposal I would expect from a fascist government, not from a democratic one. It will effectively block attempts by any group to provide information to the general public on factual aspects of a product, service, practice or organisation, that may concern them, and that they may otherwise be unaware of, if the service/product provider complains to the ACCC.

As a tertiary educated Australian with a young family, who cares deeply about the impact of my consumption and life choices, I want to be able to continue to receive information relating to the ethics and impact of products, services, practices and organisations. Whether they be cruelly derived animal products, clothing made in sweatshops in Asia, timber products from our diminishing natural forests, unhealthy food products or large profit-driven organisations using oppressive tactics to shut out their competition.

As I do now, I will continue to do my own further research and assess this information myself before making a decision to purchase or support anything or organisation. Without the initial research and information from groups and organisations who care and want a more equitable and humane world, it is extremely difficult, almost impossible, for me and other consumers to do this.

It is a fundamental and vital part of any truly democratic society to enable those acting in the public interest, to continue to be free to provide factual information to assist people to make ethical and considered decisions.

Yours sincerely

Sharon Hutchings