

Chapter 1

Introduction

Referral of inquiry

1.1 On 15 September 2016, the Senate referred an inquiry into the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement to the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee for inquiry and report by 7 February 2017.¹ The terms of reference for this inquiry are as follows:

The proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement, with particular reference to the impact of the agreement on:

- a. Australia's economy and trade;
- b. Australia's domestic labour market testing obligations and laws regarding wages, conditions and entitlements of Australian workers and temporary work visa holders;
- c. Australian investment;
- d. Australia's social, cultural and environmental policies;
- e. the effect of Investor-State Dispute Settlement;
- f. rights for copyright holders;
- g. rights for consumers; and
- h. any other related matters.

Conduct of the inquiry

1.2 The committee advertised the inquiry on its website and wrote to individuals and organisations likely to have an interest in the inquiry and invited them to make written submissions. The committee received 100 submissions to the inquiry. A large number of short pieces of correspondence and form letters were also received opposing ratification of the TPP. These included over 165 emails from persons associated with the Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network (AFTINET), over 2,400 emails from GetUp! supporters and over 4,300 emails from the SumOfUs online community.

1.3 Due to the likelihood the TPP will not enter into force, following the withdrawal of the United States of America (United States), the committee has made the decision not to hold a public hearing and to complete the inquiry 'on-the-papers'.

Structure of report

1.4 The report contains five chapters. Chapter 2 will provide a brief background to the TPP and recent events. Chapter 3 will summarise some of the key issues raised by submitters in relation to the terms of reference of the inquiry. Chapter 4 will cover

1 *Journals of the Senate*, 15 September 2016, p. 227.

discussion of Australia's trade agreements and the treaty-making process. Finally, Chapter 5 contains the committee's view and recommendations.

Acknowledgements

1.5 The committee thanks all those who contributed to the inquiry by making submissions, providing additional information or expressing their views through short correspondence and emails. The committee also acknowledges those who offered their time to attend a public hearing and give evidence.