



Sutherland Shire Environment Centre

PO Box 589 Sutherland NSW 1499 | office@ssec.org.au
www.ssec.org.au | ABN 96 127 431 611

Submission to the Joint standing Committee on Treaties Inquiry into the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)

13 April 2021

To the Joint Standing Committee

Please accept this submission on the Treaties Inquiry into the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

While the SSEC supports positive, global trading connections, we are concerned that adequate and appropriate safeguards be included in agreements to ensure the environment and human rights are protected. We are also concerned that the process for negotiating this partnership has been secretive.

SSEC would like to make these key points:

1. From our understanding, the RCEP does not deliver any increased market access for Australia. Indeed, it reinforces dependence on global production chains, which have been exposed by the pandemic and which could impede local industry development needed for economic recovery.
2. SSEC has a long history (30 years) of working to protect environments in our region and beyond. We are concerned that the RCEP has no clear or strong commitments to protect the quality of local or regional environments. Nor does it exempt state environmental regulation from the RCEP service rules.
3. SSEC has been a long-standing advocate for social justice. We object to the fact that the RCEP fails to protect workers' rights.
4. SSEC is dismayed that the negotiation process was undertaken in secret. Information throughout the negotiation period was very limited and opportunities to comment along the way were non-existent. SSEC expresses its deep dissatisfaction with the lack of transparency over agreements that will impact on Australian environments and communities.

Finally, SSEC supports the recommendations in the AFTINET submission on this Treaties Inquiry.

Tassia Kolesnikow



Chair, Sutherland Shire Environment Centre