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Report 42

Who's Afraid of the WTO? Australia and the World Trade Organisation

Joint Standing Committee on Treaties

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Membership of the Committee

Inquiry Chair	Senator Helen Coonan	
Committee Chair	Mr Kerry Bartlett MP (from 17 September 2001)	Hon. Andrew Thomson MP (to 17 September 2001)
Deputy Chair	Senator Barney Cooney	
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	Hon. Bruce Baird MP	Senator Joe Ludwig
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Terms of Reference

The Treaties Committee will conduct an inquiry into the nature and scope of Australia's relationship with the World Trade Organisation. The Committee's examination will include:

- opportunities for community involvement in developing Australia's negotiating positions on matters with the WTO;
- the transparency and accountability of WTO operations and decision making;
- the effectiveness of the WTO's dispute settlement procedures and the ease of access to these procedures;
- Australia's capacity to undertake WTO advocacy;
- the involvement of peak bodies, industry groups and external lawyers in conducting WTO disputes;
- the relationship between the WTO and regional economic arrangements;
- the relationship between WTO agreements and other multilateral agreements, including those on trade and related matters, and on environmental, human rights and labour standards; and
- the extent to which social, cultural and environmental considerations influence WTO priorities and decision making.



Foreword

This broad ranging inquiry into Australia's relationship with the WTO provided the Committee with an opportunity to evaluate some of the medium to long-term impacts of the covering agreements to which Australia became a party in 1994.

Although the focus was specifically the impact of the WTO rules based system on Australia's ability to trade, the scope of the inquiry encompassed issues relating to globalisation, the socio-economic impacts of structural changes in Australia and broader social concerns of the anti-globalisation movement.

The tendency to blame the WTO along with other global institutions including the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and the World Economic Forum, as contributing to inequality between rich and developing nations was not supported by conclusive evidence.

In fact the WTO is working to prevent small nations and disadvantaged developing countries from being excluded from the world trading system through application of the principle of non-discrimination.

It is recognised that meeting this objective also requires the involvement of large economies convinced of the benefits of liberalised trade.

The fact that there are 142 current Members of the WTO (100 of which are developing countries), with China on the verge of accession and other countries in the queue, strongly suggests that the governments of these countries recognise that openness to trade, capital and ideas is the best pathway to economic growth and reduction of poverty. Clearly if the poor nations see no benefit in trade, political support for the WTO will erode.

The quest for membership confirms that developing economies see their prospects as being enhanced by the certainty of a rules based trading system rather than being shut out of the global trading system.

Unfortunately, this message does not seem to have penetrated some sections of the community who remain resolutely unconvinced about the claimed benefits of free trade.

There is a compelling need for the government to proactively promote the benefits of trade and to educate the broader community about the gains Australia has made by virtue of its membership of the WTO and participation in the global trading system.

The Committee has recommended that one of the functions of the proposed Office of Trade Advocate be to encourage this community appreciation by running up to date and well-targeted public education programs (reviewed by the Minister for Trade) and inviting NGO members of the WTO Advisory Group to participate in Australia's delegation to the WTO Ministerial Meeting in Doha in November 2001.

On the other hand it must be acknowledged that injustices do exist in the richer economies ability to manipulate the implementation of key trade agreements such as textiles.

Even more difficult to contend with, the United States and European Union spend an estimated seven times as much on domestic subsidies, especially support for farmers as they do on foreign aid for poor countries. Agricultural subsidies that are WTO compliant effectively deny market access to developing economies.

This is also a significant access problem for medium sized export orientated economies such as Australia.

Reductions in farm subsidies and border barriers as well as greater access to markets will be a key focus for Australia in the lead up to the Ministerial Round in Qatar in November.

The political paralysis surrounding a future WTO Ministerial Round is regrettable – the WTO has delivered measurable benefits to Australia and it must be supported as part of the **solution** to freer trade and to address some of the problems of globalisation and not seen as part of the problem.

The successful settlement of the Howe leather and salmon disputes, Australia's wins in the Korean beef case and more recently in the lamb safeguards dispute with the US, as well as Australia's successful participation as a third party in a number of trade disputes, underpins the importance of the WTO dispute system and how it can be used effectively to pursue Australian export interests. The enquiry has served to highlight opportunities for the Government to take a more robust and proactive approach to engagement of the dispute settlement system.

Notwithstanding relatively recent Government initiatives such as the establishment of a dispute resolution and enforcement mechanism (DIEM) within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to assist exporters to identify where the WTO rules might help their trading interests, the enquiry revealed a lack of understanding of WTO dispute processes among Australian industry.

There is an urgent need for Government to develop other and more targeted infrastructure to foster government-industry co-operation and understanding.

There has not yet been a case in which an enterprise has formally used the DIEM to seek action to address specific concerns. Whether this is due to lack of knowledge of the rules and the capabilities of the WTO system on the part of companies, or whether DFAT efforts to provide understanding and access through seminars with key business and legal groups have failed to hit their target, is difficult to distinguish.

In reality the processes of DIEM as a mechanism for industry access to the dispute settlement system is unused.

An experienced WTO panellist, Professor Jeff Waincymer, who gave evidence to the Committee, was critical of the organisation of resources and expertise in WTO matters:

In terms of fitting together it is easier to be a critic than a playwright. Notwithstanding that all the individuals are excellent, there are too many Chinese walls in the Australian structure. There is a bit of expertise in DFAT and a bit in the A-G's, the Department of Industry desperately wants to know the rules so that they can come up with some sensible sustainable industry development policy for Australia, and there is Agriculture et cetera. So it is all over the place.

There is an identified need to for a better co-ordinated approach to WTO advocacy and policy development.

The Committee has recommended the establishment of an **Office of Trade Advocate** within DFAT to provide a focal point to co-ordinate and support the development of sectoral priorities for Australia's trade policy, WTO negotiations and consultation and advocacy, including the participation of private sector lawyers, issues of WTO compliance, the impact of structural adjustment measures and domestic subsidies, and to promote awareness of the WTO to industry and to educate the broader community about the WTO.

The Committee has also made a number of specific recommendations designed to address the need for **closer consultation with State and Territory Governments, the development of sectoral advisory committees and expert legal panels.**

The Committee has concerns about the particular difficulties of enforcement and compliance with WTO decisions where time frames allowed under the rules to bring measures into conformity with WTO obligations can effectively shut out a successful party from the fruits of their victory for many months without redress for ongoing losses.

The Committee has recommended that in review of the Dispute Settlement rules, the Government proactively seek to identify opportunities for more effective use of mediation and conciliation to secure more timely compliance with WTO rulings.

Committee members are of the view that the operations of the WTO thus far with the Secretariat and hearings located in Geneva, are predominantly Euro-centric to the detriment of the Asian Pacific countries including many developing countries. We have recommended that at the Ministerial meeting in Doha and at future WTO meetings, the Australian government advocate the establishment of an **Asia Pacific Regional Centre of the WTO**.

The Centre would serve as a venue for WTO negotiations and dispute hearings and as a training and information centre for countries within the region to develop their capacity for WTO advocacy.

Finally, given the importance of trade to Australia to Australian industry and to the Australian people, a major recommendation is for more focused and specific parliamentary scrutiny of the impact of trade liberalisation on Australia, of the opportunities for trade expansion and trade negotiation positions developed by the Government.

A Joint Standing Committee on Trade Liberalisation would provide a conduit to increase understanding between governments, industry and the community in this critical area of endeavour. We believe that this role is not currently fulfilled by the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties where the focus is whether it is in Australia's interests to ratify an international agreement and is not concerned to monitor its subsequent impact. The Trade Sub-Committee of the Joint Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade appears to focus primarily on promotion of Australia's trade interests but not by reference to advocacy, capacity building and the ability to engage the multi-lateral trading system.

The recommendations referred to in these introductory comments are part of a comprehensive set of recommendations identified by the Committee as necessary to address concerns and to strengthen Australia's ability to participate in the WTO.

Senator Helen Coonan
Inquiry Chair



List of recommendations

SECTION 1: TRADE LIBERALISATION AND THE WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION

Recommendation 1

EVALUATION OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF TRADE

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government commission multi-disciplinary research to evaluate the socio-economic impact of trade liberalisation in Australia since the conclusion of the Uruguay Round in 1994 (paragraph 1.96).

Recommendation 2

STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT

The Committee recommends that in evaluating whether Australia should enter into any future WTO Agreements, the Commonwealth Government assess the likely socio-economic impacts on industry sectors and surrounding communities.

The Committee recommends that prior to entering any future WTO commitments, the Commonwealth Government assess whether structural adjustment measures are available and appropriate to alleviate any adverse socio-economic impacts of such actions (paragraph 1.115).

SECTION 2: AUSTRALIA AND THE WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION

Recommendation 3

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

The Committee recommends that the Minister for Trade review all existing Commonwealth Government community information programs about international trade to ensure that the facts of trade liberalisation and the World Trade Organisation are addressed in a coordinated and well-targeted manner. Specifically, the Minister should:

- ensure that such programs present consistent messages across the whole of government;
- ensure that such programs are delivered in a way that reaches their target audiences;
- work with State and Territory governments and industry groups to develop complementary programs and to maximise the impact and reach of such programs; and
- encourage industry sectors to undertake their own education programs in coordination with government trade information initiatives (paragraph 2.83).

Recommendation 4

AUDIT OF INTERNET SITE

The Committee recommends that the Minister for Trade ensure that the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade undertake an audit of its WTO internet site, with a view to improving access to information about the benefits of trade liberalisation, the role of the WTO system, dispute cases, and ongoing negotiations (paragraph 2.91).

Recommendation 5

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION AT WTO MINISTERIAL MEETINGS

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government invite NGO members of the WTO Advisory Group to participate as community representatives on the official Australian delegation to the WTO Ministerial Meeting in Doha in November 2001 (paragraph 2.118).

Recommendation 6

PARLIAMENTARY SCRUTINY

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government propose the establishment of a Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Trade Liberalisation to monitor and review the impact of trade agreements on Australia, opportunities for trade expansion, and trade negotiation positions developed by the Government (paragraph 2.129).

Recommendation 7

ANNUAL REVIEW OF WTO POLICY

The Committee recommends that the proposed Joint Standing Committee on Trade Liberalisation undertake an annual review of Australia's WTO policy, including negotiating positions, current or proposed dispute cases, compliance, and structural adjustment (paragraph 2.130).

Recommendation 8

OFFICE OF TRADE ADVOCATE

The Committee recommends that an Office of Trade Advocate be established within the portfolio of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The Office of Trade Advocate should have responsibility for:

- community education programs about trade liberalisation and the WTO;
- supporting the development of proposed WTO negotiating positions, including consultation with Sectoral Advisory Committees (recommendation 9);
- management of Australia's participation in WTO dispute cases, including the use of private sector legal practitioners where appropriate (recommendation 10);
- promoting access for small and medium-sized Australian industries to the Government's Dispute Investigation and Enforcement Mechanism (DIEM);
- consultation mechanisms with State/Territory governments (recommendation 16); and
- assessment of new structural adjustment and other industry assistance programs to ensure their compliance with WTO Agreements (paragraph 2.181).

Recommendation 9

SECTORAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES

The Committee recommends that the Minister for Trade establish a series of sectoral advisory committees on multilateral trade, to include representatives from all major Australian exporting industries.

The committees should also provide for consultations with representatives of environment, labour, human rights and community groups, when such issues are material to their deliberations.

The sectoral advisory committees should meet at least biannually and prepare reports to the Trade Minister on sectoral priorities for Australia's trade policy, WTO negotiations and issues of WTO compliance (paragraph 2.226).

Recommendation 10

EXPERT LEGAL PANELS

The Committee recommends that the Minister for Trade establish a WTO advisory panel of legal advisers with trade expertise from the private profession and from academia. The legal advisory panel would:

- provide advice about the WTO compliance of domestic policies and programs, associated risks and in relation to breaches and possible dispute actions by Member countries; and
- constitute a panel of legal experts in trade issues upon which the Government can draw to supplement and augment the resources of Commonwealth agencies, when required (paragraph 2.227).

Recommendation 11

LEGAL PROFESSIONAL PARTICIPATION

The Committee recommends that Minister for Trade examine the feasibility of a secondment program between private practice lawyers and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

The secondment program should allow at least two lawyers from private practice to spend a period of rotation in DFAT, and conversely for two DFAT officials to spend a period of rotation in private legal practice; in order to broaden their understanding of the operations of the dispute settlement system and the demand for private sector advice on WTO compliance and risk management (paragraph 2.228).

Recommendation 12**AGRICULTURE**

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government take a leadership role, acting with like-minded countries, to advance agricultural trade reform through the Cairns Group and with developing countries, to push for a new negotiating round in the WTO and to seek improved market access opportunities for Australia's agriculture and food industries (paragraph 2.273).

Recommendation 13**DISPUTE SETTLEMENT UNDERSTANDING**

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government take a proactive role in review of the Dispute Settlement Understanding, in particular:

- to advocate a more responsive timeframe for compliance and enforcement; and
- to identify opportunities for more effective use of the mediation and conciliation provided in Article 5 of the Dispute Settlement Understanding to assist with appropriate and timely compliance with rulings (paragraph 2.293).

Recommendation 14**QUARANTINE**

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government, in consultation with State and Territory governments and the community:

- develop written policy guidelines and operational procedures that describe Australia's 'Appropriate Level of Protection' for quarantine; and
- that the guidelines involve benchmarks for determination of environmental factors and the application of the Precautionary Principle (paragraph 2.326).

Recommendation 15**WTO COMPLIANCE**

The Committee recommends that the Minister for Trade (in consultation with other relevant Ministers) devise a WTO compliance checklist to be used by all Ministers and their officials when developing new industry support programs (paragraph 2.356).

Recommendation 16

COMMONWEALTH / STATE CONSULTATIONS

The Committee recommends that the Minister for Trade ensure that the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade places a high priority on consulting with State and Territory Governments on trade related matters. The relationship between the Commonwealth and State governments should involve:

- regular, at least annual, ministerial level meetings;
- the establishment of a Commonwealth/State forum at the officials level to regularly discuss WTO matters, including trade policy, current and possible disputes, and industry/assistance programs;
- inclusion of State and Territory representatives on WTO consultation taskforces, where special understanding or expertise can be brought to bear; and
- inclusion of State and Territory representatives on official WTO delegations, where special understanding or expertise can be brought to bear and where there is a willingness on the part of the State or Territory governments to recognise over-riding international obligations (paragraph 2.370).

SECTION 3: THE FUTURE OF THE WTO

Recommendation 17

TRADE, ENVIRONMENT AND MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENT AGREEMENTS

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government use its position on the WTO Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE) to urge the CTE to bring forward clear proposals for resolution of the issue of potential conflicts in obligations under different multilateral agreements (paragraph 3.110).

Recommendation 18

REGIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government ensure that Australia continues to actively participate on the WTO Committee on Regional Trade Agreements, and pursue Regional Trade Agreements that will result in enhanced market access and broader economic gains for Australia if those benefits cannot be advanced expeditiously through other mechanisms (paragraph 3.134).

Recommendation 19**DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government through its membership of the Cairns Group identify barriers to participation of developing countries in the WTO, and develop strategies as appropriate to assist developing countries to make full use of the WTO and the DSU to further their trading interests (paragraph 3.178).

Recommendation 20**ASIA-PACIFIC WTO CENTRE**

The Committee recommends that at the Doha WTO Ministerial Meeting, and at future WTO meetings, the Commonwealth Government advocate the establishment of an Asia-Pacific Regional Centre of the WTO.

The Asia-Pacific Regional Centre would serve as a venue for WTO negotiations and dispute hearings, and as a training centre for developing countries within the region to build their capacity for WTO advocacy (paragraph 3.182).

Recommendation 21**HUMAN RIGHTS AND LABOUR ISSUES**

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government continue to seek support to establish a forum outside the World Trade Organisation to discuss means to promote core labour standards, comprising key international organisations including the WTO, the International Labour Organisation, the World Bank and the United Nations (paragraph 3.202).



Executive Summary

In this inquiry the Committee examined how Australia interacts with the World Trade Organisation, and how we can better use the system to further our trading interests. Some of the major issues before the WTO were also explored. The high level of public interest in trade liberalisation, and its impacts, was illustrated through the large volume of submissions and evidence before the inquiry, and we thank all those who participated.

The report is divided into three major sections:

SECTION 1 – Trade liberalisation and the World Trade Organisation

The history of the GATT and the WTO, and the basic workings of the WTO, are outlined in this section.

The meaning of the term 'globalisation', and its effects, are hotly debated within the Australian and international communities. Many groups and individuals from disparate backgrounds have come together in Seattle, Prague, Melbourne, Quebec and Genoa to protest against globalisation. The Committee has explored some definitions of globalisation in this report.

Clearly there are 'winners' and 'losers' as a result of trade liberalisation, both in Australia and internationally. While some industries gain from increased access to overseas markets, others find it difficult to compete against increased competition. These industries and their associated communities find it difficult to believe in the overall benefits of trade liberalisation.

The Committee has recommended a comprehensive evaluation of the socioeconomic impacts of trade liberalisation in Australia. We have also recommended that prior to entering any future WTO Agreements, Australia should evaluate the socio-economic impacts of such Agreements, and the appropriateness of structural adjustment measures to alleviate negative impacts (Recommendations 1 & 2).

SECTION 2 – Australia and the World Trade Organisation

Education, consultation and participation

The ability for the Australian community, including industry groups, non-government organisations (NGOs), the legal profession, and individuals, to participate in WTO policy decision-making and dispute processes, was a major theme throughout submissions to the inquiry.

We found that there is clearly a need for more effective community education about the role, responsibilities and limitations of the WTO. While the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) provides a number of education programs and a comprehensive internet site, these could be improved.

At the 1999 Seattle WTO meeting industry and business groups were invited to participate on the official Australian delegation, while NGO groups were excluded. The Government has since implemented a number of measures for increased NGO consultation and participation, but this remains an issue for the forthcoming Doha Ministerial meeting in November 2001.

A number of private legal practitioners submitted that DFAT's resources are overstretched by the current workload of WTO issues, and asked that the private profession be given some access to government WTO work.

The Committee has made recommendations regarding increased community education and participation in WTO activities (recommendations 3-5); parliamentary scrutiny (recommendations 6-7); and increased participation for industry groups and the legal profession (recommendations 9-11).

Administrative arrangements

The Committee received evidence arguing that there needs to be better coordination of WTO issues at the bureaucratic level of Government. While DFAT is the lead agency for WTO matters, a number of other Commonwealth agencies are involved in WTO matters, particularly disputes. Other recommendations relating to education, communication, consultation and Commonwealth/State relations, illustrated the need for a new office to deal with WTO matters. The Australian Greenhouse Office provides a useful model.

The Committee has recommended that the Government establish an Office of Trade Advocate within the portfolio of foreign affairs and trade, drawing on existing DFAT resources and augmenting them with public and private sector expertise as needed (recommendation 8).

Agriculture and quarantine

Agriculture is of great importance to Australia both as a significant export industry and as the backbone of many rural and regional communities. While agriculture has not yet benefited fully from increased trade liberalisation, the inclusion of agriculture in the 1994 Uruguay Round was a major achievement. Australia, both through the Cairns Group and individually, continues to be one of the strongest proponents for increased agricultural trade liberalisation in future WTO negotiations.

Australia's experience in the WTO dispute process is built largely around agricultural issues - for example in the Lamb dispute as a complainant and the Canadian Salmon case as a respondent. Protection of our high quarantine status carries a high profile within Australia and is a target for many overseas countries wishing to expand access to our markets. We have made three recommendations regarding agriculture, the dispute settlement process and quarantine (recommendations 12-14).

Commonwealth/State relations

The Australian Constitution confers responsibility for international matters, including trade, to the Commonwealth Government. However, the reach of many WTO Agreements extends to State policies and regional industries, as demonstrated in the Canadian Salmon case. The Committee heard evidence that existing consultation mechanisms between the Commonwealth and the States/Territories are not adequate. We have recommended that these be improved (recommendations 15-16).

SECTION 3 – The Future of the WTO

The WTO has been in operation for just over five years. Over this short time its profile has increased to vastly overshadow that of the GATT in its 50-year history. There are now a raft of claims that the WTO should increase its transparency and accountability, allow for increased NGO involvement, and extend its agenda to more comprehensively include issues such as the environment, human rights and labour issues. Some say that in this respect the WTO is a 'victim of its own success'.

While the Uruguay Round Agreements resulted in substantial trade liberalisation, it is widely recognised by Member governments that there is more to achieve. Developing countries in particular feel that their interests were not fully served in some of the Uruguay Round outcomes. The failure to launch a new round of trade negotiations at Seattle in 1999 has placed increasing pressure on the WTO, and the forthcoming meeting at Doha, Qatar, in November 2001 will be closely monitored by the international community. Should the meeting fail to launch a new round of

negotiations, there is some doubt about the ongoing stability of the multilateral trading system.

Transparency issues

While the WTO allows for some participation of non-government organisations, there are calls for expansion of the rules to allow further access to non-Member parties. While some argue that the WTO should employ the United Nations model for NGO consultation and participation in debates and negotiations, this is not seen as appropriate by Member governments.

The dispute settlement system allows for some participation for NGOs, through the use of 'expert witnesses' by dispute panels, and through the lodging of 'amicus submissions'. Amicus submissions (made by 'friends of the court') have been accepted by several WTO dispute panels, however, an appropriate role for NGO submissions is still being debated amongst WTO member governments. A perceived inadequacy in composition of dispute and Appellate Body panels has also attracted some criticism.

Multilateral and regional agreements

There is increasing debate at the international level about trade and the environment - particularly the need to allow domestic governments to legislate for environmental protection without being in breach of WTO Agreements. It is important to ensure that such measures are not protectionist policies in disguise.

The relationship between WTO Agreements and Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs), particularly those MEAs containing trade sanctions for noncompliance, is also the subject of ongoing debate. While there has not been a case before the WTO dispute system involving a conflict between the WTO and an MEA, there are questions about which international treaty would take precedence in such a situation.

The WTO's Committee on Trade and the Environment is monitoring the relationship between the WTO and MEAs but as yet has not pronounced a solution. We recommend that the Australian Government continue to use its position on the Committee on Trade and the Environment to ensure that conflict between these agreements is avoided (recommendation 17).

Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs), such as those between Australia and New Zealand (the CER Agreement) are allowed under the WTO rules. The absence of new multilateral negotiations has resulted in a proliferation of RTAs as countries seek to increase their trade opportunities. The Australian Government is currently exploring the possibility of such an agreement with the United States.

The multilateral trading system must continue to be the primary vehicle for future trade liberalisation. However, Australia should be open to negotiating and securing RTAs where they can deliver a benefit to Australian industry. We have recommended that Australia continue its involvement with the WTO Committee on Regional Trade Agreements, and continue to pursue RTAs where appropriate (recommendation 18).

Developing countries

Although all WTO Members are 'equal partners' in the organisation, the ability for developing countries to fully participate in the WTO is sometimes limited by resource and other constraints. A number of developing countries do not even have permanent representation at the WTO in Geneva.

However, developing nation governments have expressed their support for the WTO system and their desire to participate in it, as they see trade as a key mechanism for improving their economic base. Developing countries and supporting NGOs have called for a number of amendments to existing WTO rules to allow them further time to implement current agreements. The growing number of developing nations in the WTO membership (now over two-thirds of total membership) will also significantly shape any future WTO negotiations.

We have recommended that Australia continue to use its position in the Cairns Group to further the ability of developing nations to fully participate in the WTO (recommendation 19). The establishment of an Asia-Pacific Regional Centre of the WTO would also assist greater participation for developing nations (recommendation 20).

Labour and human rights issues

There are arguments that the WTO should redraft its Agreements to include labour and human rights clauses. Proponents argue that trade liberalisation may impact adversely on labour and human rights standards, particularly as companies seek to move their operations to countries with lower wages or occupational health and safety requirements. Others argue that the WTO is not the appropriate forum in which to deal with these issues, citing the International Labour Organisation (ILO), United Nations and others as the relevant agencies.

The Committee has recommended that the Australian Government continue its push to establish an inter-agency forum to discuss these issues (recommendation 21).

Glossary and abbreviations

ABARE	Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACCI	Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
ACEL	Australian Centre for Environmental Law
ACFOA	Australian Council for Overseas Aid
ACTU	Australian Council of Trade Unions
AFFA	Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry Australia
AFGC	Australian Food and Grocery Council
AFTINET	Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network
AGS	Australian Government Solicitor
A-Gs	Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department
ALOP	Appropriate Level of Protection
AMWU	Australian Manufacturers and Workers Union
ANU	Australian National University
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
APHEDA	Australian People for Health, Education and Development Abroad Inc.
AQIS	Australian Quarantine Inspection Service

ASCI	Australian Steel Construction Industry
ATCG	Agriculture Trade Advisory Group
AWB	Australian Wheat Board
AWG	Australian Writers' Guild
BCA	Business Council of Australia
CAA/OXFAM	Community Aid Abroad/OXFAM
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CER	Australia-New Zealand Agreement on Closer Economic Relations
CIE	Centre for International Economics
CRTA	Committee on Regional Trade Agreements
CTE	Committee on Trade and Environment
DEWRBSB	Commonwealth Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business
DFAT	Commonwealth Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DFAIT	Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
DIEM	Dispute Investigation and Enforcement Mechanism
DISR	Commonwealth Department of Industry, Science and Resources
DSB	Dispute Settlement Body
DSU	Dispute Settlement Understanding
EC	European Community
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
EU	European Union
FMD	Foot and Mouth Disease
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services

GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRA	Import Risk Assessment
LDC	Least-Developed Country
LMOs	Living Modified Organisms
MAI	Multilateral Agreement on Investment
MEA	Multilateral Environment Agreement
MEAA	Media, Entertainment Arts Alliance
MFN	Most Favoured Nation rule in the WTO
MLA	Meat & Livestock Australia
NAFI	National Association of Forest Industries
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NFF	National Farmers' Federation
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NTC	National Trade Consultations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PMV	Passenger Motor Vehicles
RTA	Regional Trade Agreement
S & D measures	Special & Differential provisions
SPAA	Screen Producers' Association of Australia
SPS Agreement	Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
TBT	Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade
TCF	Textiles, Clothing, Footwear
TPAC	Trade Policy Advisory Council
TRIMS	Agreement on Trade-Related Investment Measures

TRIPS	Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
UNYA	United Nations Youth Association
USTR	United States Trade Representative
WEF	World Economic Forum
WTO	World Trade Organisation