



Submission No 19

Australia's trade and investment relations under the Australia-New Zealand Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement

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Apple & Pear Australia

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The Secretary
Trade Sub-Committee
Joint Standing Committee on
Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Parliament House
CANBERRA
ACT 2600

Dear Sir,

Inquiry into Australia and New Zealand Closer Economic Relations

Apple and Pear Australia Limited (APAL) welcomes the opportunity to submit relevant comments to the inquiry into Australia and New Zealand Closer Economic Relations (ANZCER). Along with Biosecurity Australia the apple and pear industry has been working hard to establish an agreed import risk assessment profile for apples from New Zealand. The prevalence in New Zealand of a number of serious pests to pome fruits has added a great deal of complexity and angst to this process and it has taken an enormous amount of time and effort to undertake this assessment.

Australian and New Zealand apple industries have a long history of collaboration, particularly in research and development areas, but also in the management of intellectual property in plant varieties and trademarks. However the access issue for New Zealand apples into the Australian market has created some tensions between our respective industries for more than twenty years with an import ban being maintained due to the risks associated with serious pests in the New Zealand industry. The respective industries and Government bodies on both sides of the Tasman Sea have expended substantial resources to explore this issue to ensure that all risks are well managed in the process of defining a trade protocol.

The Australian industry has maintained the consistent line that all decisions regarding the risks associated with importing unwanted pests be entirely based on science and that Australia has a sovereign right to set an appropriated level of protection consistent with its environment. Unfortunately the New Zealand industry has taken a counter position and strongly suggested that Australia is in breach of its obligations under ANZCER and World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules.

It is with this background that we provide our comments to the inquiry into ANZCER. APAL believes the ANZCER agreement provides an excellent framework under which trade and economic relations between our two nations should be conducted. It provides all the necessary enablers to allow free trade and at the same time provides the mechanisms to protect industries from unnecessary risks due to pest incursions.

We strongly urge the Australian Government to continue the process of communication, co-operation and negotiation as a priority in determining the outcome of trade disputes between Australia and New Zealand under the well considered framework of the existing ANZCER agreement.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Russell', with a stylized, cursive script.

Tony Russell
Business Manager