



10 July 2008

The Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
The Australia-Chile Free Trade Agreement
By Email: jsct@aph.gov.au

Submission 9
TT 17 June 2008

Dear Secretary

The CFMEU would like to support the submission presented to the Committee by the Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network (AFTINET).

We understand negotiations have concluded in relation to the Australia/Chile Free Trade Agreement (FTA), however our union shares the concerns of AFTINET specifically with reference to:

- **The expansion of Visa 457.** The FTA text includes visa 457 in the agreement and locks in the requirements despite the scheme currently being under government review. The CFMEU opposes the inclusion of the visa in the text of the FTA.
- **Reduced ability for governments to regulate on services and investment.** Commitments in services and investment restrict the ability of governments to regulate in the public interest. The CFMEU takes that position that democratically elected governments are best placed to take decisions on policy matters and should not be constrained by prohibitive restrictions such as those included in the text of the agreement.
- **Lack of independent assessment.** There have been no assessments on the social, cultural, environmental, or labour impacts that such an agreement may have. The CFMEU believes the Commonwealth should undertake all such assessments before an FTA is made.
- **No clear exclusion of public services.** Public services should be clearly and unambiguously excluding from trading agreements.
- **Investor-State Disputes Process.** This allows government regulation to be challenged by unaccountable corporations. Our union takes the view that corporations may abuse this system in their own interest.

Thank you for the opportunity to put our view on this agreement. The CFMEU urges the Parliament to strongly consider making the relevant amendments to the FTA before it is ratified.

Yours sincerely

John Sutton
National Secretary
CFMEU