

-----Original Message-----

From: Dion Giles [SMTP:dgiles@central.murdoch.edu.au]
Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2000 5:07 PM
To: jsct@aph.gov.au
Subject: Submission to WTO inquiry

The Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Fax 02 6277 4827
email jsct@aph.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

I very much appreciate your invitation to make an individual submission to the inquiry into Australia's relationship with the World Trade Organisation. I am sending a submission both by email and by fax. I apologise for leaving it so late.

Yours sincerely
Dion E. Giles

53 Wood Street
Fremantle, WA 6160
Ph. 08 9335 7646 or 0411 745 538
email dgiles@central.murdoch.edu.au

September 14, 2000

[submission follows]

Australia's relationship with the
World Trade Organisation

- The Prime Minister has many times stated in recent weeks, in reference to United Nations committees, that it is not the place of unelected outside organisations to determine how the Australian people run Australia's domestic policies.

- In reference to suggestions that trade policy should be related to the human rights record of the trading partner, the unanimous view of the Government and Opposition politicians and the mandarins of the Treasury and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is that this is not desirable.

If the politicians and senior public officials are to be taken at their word, the second of these observations means that trade and foreign policy should not be mutually dependent, and the first means that we should sever connections with the WTO and its rules which limit Australian electors' say

in domestic policy far more than do unenforced human rights treaties with the United Nations. That is, maintaining democracy in Australia requires that we abandon WTO and in future subject to referendum (the only genuine mandate) all treaties affecting the lives of Australians in a major way.

National and international measures loosely grouped as "globalisation" (or "globalism" to distinguish them from such benign global trends as better communications) include

1. Transfer of decision-making powers from elected national governments to unelected supranational bodies (e.g. Tasmanians having to ask WTO for permission to exclude dodgy salmon, Australia tied to tariff reduction policies to facilitate the global "race to the bottom" in which increasingly unfettered trade is used to establish the world's worst practice in terms of labour, social and environmental standards as the "internationally competitive" norm.)

2. Tax revenue base -- extending the same "race to the bottom" to world competition in the area of tax breaks to supranational corporations -- to shift focus from the foreign to the domestic and from the wealthy to the poor (hence the GST).

3. A vast quantity of fossil fuel converted into greenhouse gases in order to carry coals to Newcastle for no other purpose than to give supra-national corporations the power and wealth that accrues from a trade-driven international race downwards.

My plea as an Australian citizen, counter to everything put forward on behalf of their sponsors by those who conducted the recent WEF meeting in Melbourne, is

1. Redirect foreign policy so that it accords with the national interest, defined as the interests of the Australian community which is served by a region in which colonial empires are disbanded, human rights are guaranteed, and democracy rules.

2. Replace WTO and its rules with a trade policy in which imports and exports are facilitated if and only if they assist the people of Australia and its trading partners by fulfilling material needs which cannot readily be fulfilled from within the individual countries. Discriminate sharply through tariffs in favour of products based on acceptable (by Australian standards) labour, environmental and social conditions and against those which are not. Encourage other countries to do the same.

Dion Giles

53 Wood Street

Fremantle, WA 6160

Ph. 08 9335 7646 or 0411 745 538

email dgiles@central.murdoch.edu.au