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From: Anne Whittingham [SMTP:annewhit@norex.com.au]
Sent: Tuesday, August 22, 2000 10:12 PM
To: jsct@aph.gov.au
Subject: comment due 25.8.2000 re. Australia's relationship with the World Trade Organisation

This email is a response to the public invitation for submissions concerning Australia's relationship with the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

The Australian Government should prepare and implement an education programme for the general public and students, which alerts people to the significant impact that WTO policies have on trade decisions taken by the Australian Government.

This education programme should be incorporated into environmental studies which present alternative models for handling issues addressed by the WTO. For example, concepts showing viable local communities with diverse socio - cultural - economic bases should be considered in comparison to communities that give priority to participation in the global "level playing field" for agricultural commodities

The WTO should be dismantled because of the imperative that governments around the world give priority to environmental concerns that aim to save the earth, water, air and energy resources of the planet, above the comparatively narrow range of criteria upon which the WTO is now predicated.

The basic assumptions upon which the WTO operates (economic level playing fields, etc) are outdated concepts that fail to incorporate developments in human awareness of the extent and severity of environmental issues facing humanity on the planet. For example, actively encouraging additional trade in basic foodstuffs, such as pork, between nations, greatly increases transport requirements, thus adding to fuel consumption and associated environmental consequences.

Democratically elected governments around the world have responsibilities to citizens to integrate social, environmental, employment and cultural concerns to build communities - not to simplistically isolate economic factors and pretend that they can be addressed in isolation - such as can occur when WTO policies are applied conveniently, but not intelligently, to the management of human communities.

As David Suzuki has said: humanity needs to develop a joy in the complex pleasures of connectness with the natural world - not simple pleasures such as the consumption of new imported gadgets such as cars.

Anne Whittingham