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**From:** Kim Tangey [SMTP:ktangey@netspace.net.au]  
**Sent:** Friday, August 25, 2000 3:20 PM  
**To:** jsct@aph.gov.au  
**Cc:** jsct@aph.gov.au  
**Subject:** Australia's relationship with the World Trade Organisation

The relationship between Australia and the WTO is certainly one that could well do with greater openness and accountability. I wish the committee well in its' deliberations and trust that they will inform the electorate of the outcomes of their deliberations as loudly as possible.

I am particularly concerned that the WTO as presently constituted represents the interests of large corporations against those of other interested parties concerned with issues of local and cultural self determination, environmental standards and labour standards. The campaign to ram the MAI down the throat of the public should be seen as a key example of unwanted globalism from above and the committee should devote some considerable time to analysing why this campaign failed. They should then factor the wishes of those who defeated this campaign into their conclusions, rather than try to promote another MAI by stealth.

Labour standards are an area where Australian interests should be jealously guarded by our political leaders and the argument that they can be protected via non binding ILO rulings is disingenuous at best. Labour standards either need to be explicitly covered by binding WTO rulings or else the ILO needs increased powers such that it can rule on labour standards with the same binding powers that the WTO already has. Anything less is setting the standards of Australian workers on a slippery slope in the direction of perhaps Korea or Malaysia or who knows where else.

A similar scenario could apply to environmental standards if they are left out of WTO considerations. Many regimes are happy to bypass any environmental safeguards in order to secure a few corporate dollars. One would hope that the Australian government on behalf of the Australian people would not support an international organisation which had the ability to overturn local environmental standards.

My hope is that the Australian government will push for the WTO to have enhanced powers to enable Governments to significantly improve both labour standards and environmental standards for their peoples without being coerced by corporations aiming for the cheapest and dirtiest deal going.

I understand that expanded comments can be made to the committee over the coming weeks and I shall endeavour to do so. I await your deliberations with interest.

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