

**The Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600**

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14th September 2000

**Submission to Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
re Australia's relationship with the
World Trade Organisation**

On behalf of CAMAI, the Coalition who have previously submitted their concerns to the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties regarding Australia's involvement with the MAI, I wish to tender the following submission to the JSCT regarding Australia's relationship with the World Trade Organisation.

Our Coalition considers that Australia should only be a signatory to treaties that have compulsory and enforceable obligations to comply with international law on human rights, environmental standards, social justice, labour standards and cultural safeguards.

Therefore, we are most concerned that after more than 50 years of World Trade Organisation operations issues regarding global poverty and extreme under-development have not been effectively addressed.

Furthermore, during the same period, environmental degradation has escalated on an unprecedented scale due to the excessive economic activities of over-developed countries, which are encouraged by the World Trade Organisation.

We are particularly concerned:

- that there is transparency and accountability of WTO operations and decision making
- that there is community involvement in developing Australia's negotiating positions on matters with the WTO;
- that environmental, social and cultural considerations are the major influence on WTO priorities and decision making
- about the relationship between WTO agreements and other multilateral agreements, including those on trade and related matters, and on environmental, human rights and labour standards.

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