



**Queensland
Government**

**Premier of Queensland
and Minister for Trade**

Please quote: MN74175/CM15/IGR

02 JUN 2005

Dr Andrew Southcott MP
Committee Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

TT 15 March 2005
Submission No: 4

Dear Andrew

Thank you for your letter of 15 March 2005 concerning the proposed amendments to the Singapore-Australia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA). I note the amendments relate to the recognition of law degrees, rules of origin, food standards, horticultural goods and government procurement.

The Queensland Government supports the importance of the SAFTA reviews. The development of a closer economic partnership with Singapore has many benefits for Queensland businesses and exporters.

Under the proposed amendments, Singapore will recognise two additional Australian Bachelor of Laws programs. However, the University of Queensland remains the only Bachelor of Laws program in Queensland that can benefit from the SAFTA. Queensland universities that offer Bachelor of Laws programs include the Queensland University of Technology, James Cook University, Griffith University and Bond University. The Queensland Government would expect efforts be made to ensure that all Queensland Bachelor of Laws programs benefit from the SAFTA and proposes such requests for recognition be tabled in future reviews. Furthermore, it would seem that much focus is being placed on metropolitan universities, and the Queensland Government considers that regional universities should receive similar consideration.

The Queensland Government supports the proposed amendments to rules of origin. Queensland importers would benefit from a reduction in paperwork associated with the removal of the requirement for Declarations of Origin on first shipments. The Queensland Government considers that the continuing requirement for subsequent shipments to have Declarations of Origin will maintain the integrity of the rules of origin.

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The Queensland Government also supports the proposed sectoral annex on food standards. Processes that ensure equivalent food standards and inspection systems in Singapore and Australia will positively influence trade in this sector between the two countries. However, it is important to affirm that food manufactured in other countries and incorporated into Singaporean exported products is subject to the same level of inspection as those products manufactured wholly in Singapore.

The Sectoral Annex on Horticultural Products appears to have specified adequate definitions, procedures and conditions for the importation into Australia of certain horticultural goods. It is critical to ensure that arrangements under the SAFTA will maintain Australia's high standards of quarantine protection on horticultural products in order to provide continued protection for Australia's horticultural industries. The difficulties in eradicating citrus canker and fire ants in this State demonstrate the need to maintain strong quarantine systems and the scope of problems that may arise when standards are breached.

As the SAFTA applies to government procurement undertaken by the Federal Government, the amendment relating to government procurement does not present any issues for the Queensland Government

I thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed amendments to the SAFTA.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'P Beattie', written in black ink.

**PETER BEATTIE MP
PREMIER AND MINISTER FOR TRADE**