

Sir,

It is in Australia's interest that urgent reform of the regulations that govern adherence to the rules of the WTO should be addressed.

The world economies were "sold" the idea that the GATT agreements and

subsequently the WTO would be of benefit to them in freeing up markets, maximising the advantages of world trade and removing barriers that impeded free trade.

In reality, over the last 15 to 20 years, the larger, more powerful countries have benefited at the expense of smaller and poorer economies. And even

in the winners team, only those holding the largest share of the spoils have

grown fat on the banquet that has ensued.

With particular reference to Australia, we have seen our trading position as an exporter of goods and produce dramatically decline in real terms compared to our previous standing.

This decline had been demonstrated in lower prices for our agricultural products, wool, minerals especially coal and manufactured items.

Australia, in their naivety, but determined to rigidly adhere to playing the game, hoodwinked by the mythical level playing field, have watched open-mouthed while other countries, to their unacknowledged shame, have seen the likes of USA, Japan, China, Europe and especially France, apply obstacles which restrict entry to their markets and to flagrantly subsidise

their export produce to other markets.

These same countries hypocritically and unashamedly apply to the WTO for punitive measures against countries who adopt similar schemes so they can competitively enter the protagonists market.

Australia has been penalised on two occasions by measures applied by our

so-called ally, the USA in the Howe Leather fiasco and in our lamb exports to the States. In the former, the market subsidy was of such piddling insignificance that the USA should have been laughed to scorn for their puffery. The latter case was typical bully boy tactics by them. To our shame, Australia capitulated without offering even a token rebuttal.

The consequence of our strict application and adherence to the WTO rules are evident - traditional markets we held have been usurped by our competitors and their brazen determination to subsidise their otherwise uncompetitive exports, completely disregarding the rules of free trade. Their arrogance in threatening other countries who may adopt similar

tactics is further proof of their hypocrisy and their commitment to protect their home markets.

Consequently, Australias share of export markets has dwindled, our trading debt escalates by an average \$Amillion a month, the Australian dollar depreciates alarmingly with the Reserve Banks ineffectual attempts to arrest the slide, currency speculators attack the \$A and foreign corporations buy up Australian companies , mines and utilities at bargain basement prices.

There is a day of reckoning coming, and it may already be too late to take remedial action to prevent Australias plunge into third world country status.

I am all for the Commonwealth government retaking the initiative to enact whatever steps are needed to regain control of our sovereignty, to return to trading surplus, to apply penalties to currency speculators, to revoke WTO agreements which manifestly work against Australias best interests and to adopt necessary measures to prevent Australian companies being swallowed up by foreign interests.

Yours sincerely,
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