

**SENATE FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE
REFERENCES COMMITTEE**

**INQUIRY INTO GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TRADE IN
SERVICES AND AUSTRALIA/US FREE TRADE AGREEMENT**

SUBMISSION

Submission No: 122

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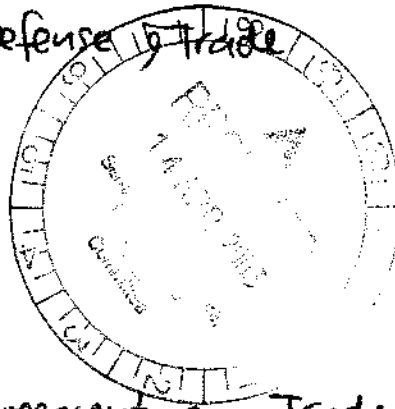
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No. of Pages: 3

Attachments: No

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The Secretary
Senate Foreign Affairs, Defense & Trade
References Committee
Suite S1:57
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600



Dr. D. Mead
P.O. Box 10031
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10.4.03.

Re: General Agreement on Trade in Services
and
Australia / US Free Trade Agreement.

I wish to submit the following to the
Committee with respect to the terms of reference
of your enquiry.

As a medical practitioner providing medical services
to disadvantaged people, I am particularly concerned
at negotiations to open Australian public health
services to foreign companies. In my view, any
degree of foreign involvement in Australian public
health services will severely compromise these services'
ability to provide health services to Australian
citizens.

Public health services should be protected from
profiteering by private companies. The effective
privatization which would result from the
opening of public health services to foreign
involvement under GATS/USFTA would place the
profit motive at the heart of these services
and would destroy them. Access to and
quality of health services would both be

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adversely effected. Ordinary Australians would experience poorer health outcomes. It is clear that the US health system is inefficient expensive and fails to provide health services to many Americans. Australian must, at all costs, avoid following the US example.

Health services in Australia must remain in Australian hands. They should be publically funded and protected by Australian law against profiteering by foreign multinationals or other foreign companies.

The plan to include the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme in GATS/USFTA negotiations is a major cause for concern. The PBS system must be protected. Multinational drug companies must be kept at arms length from the PBS system. Legislation should be enacted to protect the PBS from the influence of these drug companies.

It is clear that GATS/USFTA undermines the ability of Australian governments to regulate and own public services. Under GATS/USFTA ownership and regulation would pass into foreign hands over which ordinary Australians would have no control. GATS/USFTA is undemocratic and the negotiations and possible outcomes directly threaten Australian

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national sovereignty.

I am concerned that GATS/FTA negotiations are conducted in secrecy. Information regarding the negotiations is not readily available. The negotiations must be conducted directly by Parliament in conjunction with input from the Australian public. Any outcomes of negotiations must be put to the Australian people before being signed off.

Australia's national interests must be protected from the profit-driven activities of foreign investors.

Yours sincerely
D Mead.

Dr. Damian Mead.