

**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: 81

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The Secretary
Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee
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Please accept this as my submission into the Senate inquiry into the General Agreement on Trade in Services and the US Australia Free Trade Agreement.
The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)

I recommend that Australia should make no further commitments under the GATS until

- a) The Council for Trade in Services has carried out 'an assessment on trade in services in overall terms and on a sectoral basis with reference to the objectives of the GATS and of Article IV in particular.' The GATS agreement itself stipulates that such an assessment should be carried out.
- b) The Commonwealth government has commissioned and carried out multi disciplinary research to evaluate the socio-economic impact of trade liberalization in Australia since the conclusion of the Uruguay round in 1994. This was the recommendation of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties arising from its inquiry into Australia's relationship with the WTO in 2001.
- c) The Howard government agrees to release full details of all the requests made of Australia by other countries and the offers Australia proposes to make to other countries.
- d) The status of public services (including, but not limited to, health, education, and water) under the GATS is clarified and the GATS agreement is amended to clearly exclude public services from coverage by the GATS.
- e) The Senate Inquiry into the GATS has reported.

The US Australia Free Trade Agreement

I am opposed to the negotiation of this agreement because

- a) The gains to Australia will be either very small or negative. One study (The Centre for International Economics) predicts gains of \$9 billion over 20 years ie \$26.05 for every person in Australia per year. Another independent study (ACIL Consulting) shows that there are no economic benefits and could be economic losses for Australia.
- a) Australia's disastrous trade deficit, currently running at \$3 billion per month, will be made worse by increased access for US imports, and our already depleted manufacturing industry will be further disadvantaged.
- c) The US has requested the abolition of the Foreign Investment Review Board, the abolition of labelling for GM food, the watering down of our quarantine laws, eliminating local content requirements for film and television, changes to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, a complaints mechanism for investors which is likely to be modelled on the infamous NAFTA disputes procedure, greater access to our telecommunications sector and other 'appropriate service sectors' and removal of our few remaining tariffs. It is unacceptable that any of these things should be traded away.
- d) Australia is likely to lose both trade and status within the Asia-Pacific region of we sign up to a deal with the US.
- e) It is unacceptable that trade and security be linked in this way.
- f) It is highly unlikely that the US will agree to remove its farm and other subsidies.

SIGNATURE: *Tara Cully*.....

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