

INTERGOV RELS NSW



THE CABINET OFFICE
NEW SOUTH WALES

COPY

Mr Brenton Holmes
Secretary
Senate Select Committee on the Free Trade Agreement
between Australia and the United States of America
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

16 JUL 2004

Dear Mr Holmes

I am writing in response to your recent letter on behalf of the Senate Select Committee requesting additional information on States' views of the Australia - United States Free Trade Agreement (the Agreement).

Your letter asked a number of questions in relation to the impact of the proposed Agreement, including in relation to the processes of Commonwealth - State consultation, the issues considered by the NSW Cabinet, and requirements for implementation at the State level.

Recognising that the nature of the negotiation process often required responses in very short timeframes, New South Wales was, on the whole, satisfied with the consultation process. There was regular contact throughout the negotiation process, at the Ministerial and officer level between the Commonwealth and New South Wales, and between New South Wales and the other States and Territories.

As you would appreciate, matters considered by the NSW Cabinet, and the material provided to Cabinet for its consideration, are subject to the Cabinet convention of strict confidentiality.

Regarding the implementation of the Agreement, it is likely that changes to agency policies and practices will be required to comply with the Agreement in some areas, particularly in relation to government procurement. The details of implementation will be a challenging issue for all jurisdictions to consider.

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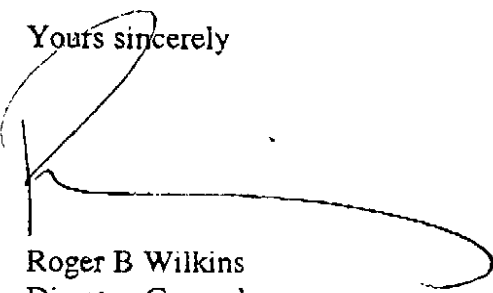
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In closing, I would point out that the NSW Government is on the record as supporting the ratification of the Agreement, as a valuable opportunity to enhance our trading relationship with one of Australia's most important trading partners.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these additional comments.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. Wilkins', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Roger B Wilkins
Director-General