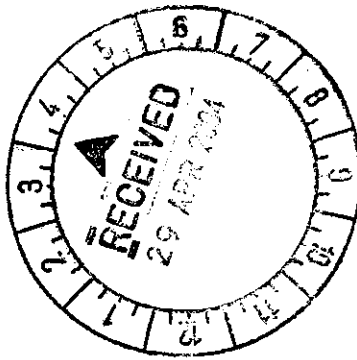




Ray Cox

25th April, 2004.

The Chairman,
The Senate Select Committee on the U.S. F. T. A.
Parliament House,
Canberra, 2600, A.C.T.

Dear Sir,

Please accept this submission as my rejection to the U.S. F. T. A and my appeal to the Senate Select Committee to recognise the inherent harm it has the capacity to do to the vast majority of Australian citizens. It follows this Agreement if entered could not be in Australia's national interest and as more information and inquiry has shown relating to the essence of negotiations many people now understand the reported position why Australia should never permitted it ever having been considered.

My interest in these negotiations began on reading and hearing of the secretive nature of these negotiations. When eventually, I understand increasing public and industry concerns, statements made and published contained misleading information. I knew from further reading this proposed Agreement could not just damage Australia's wellbeing but had the potential to be dangerous.

As an interested citizen I attended the Sydney hearing

on 19th April, it was confirmation by numerous organisations of the need and urgency for the rejection in 'B' entirely based on "Not in Australia's Interests" involving the individual and collective adverse impacts.

The media group, screen writers etc spoke of the many problems they had with the agreement not the least how they had not received the expected consultation they had been promised. When the issue of Australian Culture Content was raised I recall Senator Tegen asking "look at this Committee Law would you describe Australian Culture"? (or very similar). The media replied on the world wide success of Mad Max yet had to be voiced over before accepted in the U.S.A.

You may have noticed I am writing this on Anzac Day, in the evening, and I feel obliged to include where I stand. I am a retired Master Mariner on 80% disability war pension from R.A.A.F. W.W.II. Of equal importance I have a very varied extended family and it is because of the immediate and longer term consequences I list many of my concerns briefly -

Limitations on Australia's processes. The procedures and constraints are alien to the variety and complexities for our governments needs and future best interests. It is folly for our present government to think once entering the legal minefield there will not be inherent dangers of possible huge compensation payments. Surely the Canadian experience is one warning without all the others in Article 21.5 and 21.11.

Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. The potential for price increases and or removal of items brought about by drug companies having such a huge lever in dealings with our government can only exacerbate the declining benefits (P.B.S.) that should be the entitlements of all Australians, in particular those most in need. As I see the U.S.F.T.A it will put self interest of drug companies before the health policies necessary for wellbeing of Australians. I find it remarkable the recommendations of Sir Ninian Stephen report are contemplated but agreement with our government do not extend beyond 2004. Commonwealth Serum Laboratories has served us well what is it that some unknown factor need be introduced other than the potential loss of more Australia's assets.

G. E. Labelling and Quarantine Policies. It seems this F.T.A will give U.S. government and U.S. companies direct input into Australian laws, restrictions, policies, standards etc. In discussing this issue with people they express the same amazement I hold, in fact it begs belief that with all the goodwill and benefits as a result of our policies not withstanding the enormous potential that we have these issues were considered by Australian negotiators.

Environment. It is notable that statements such as not be laws "disguised restriction on trade in services". This is outrageous and is symptomatic of the dangers I referred to earlier. Such concerns as Greenhouse Gas and Climate Change and governments Kyoto position etc.

Regulation of Essential Services. As these services include our health, water, education, postal and environment at all levels of government it is a great concern the definition as services Not supplied "on a commercial basis, not in competition with one or more service suppliers" surely that is a questionable opportunity for contest. It is wrong and could bring self harm to allow U.S. Companies full market access. As a nation we should be encouraging development of Australian companies even if only to reduce the outflow of profits to abroad, balance of payments and so on. The inclusion of "Stand-Still" and "Carve-out" worsens an already flawed agreement.

On Foreign Investment. Article 11.3 allowing U.S. investment national treatment combined with no requirement to use local products, transfer technology not contribute to exports fails once again to have our national interests safeguarded.

The changes from F.T.A. on Australia's F.I.R. Board involving \$50 million to \$800 million are huge and capable of predatory and adverse impacts on our enterprises and balance of payments.

Content Rules / Australian Cultural Role. It is difficult enough now for Australian cultural content to be maintained, with quotas "bound" and changes not yet envisaged in media presentation F.T.A. restrictions a further adverse impact. As I heard at the Committee hearing in Sydney 19th April there is ridiculously low Australian content already compared to other countries. We as a nation must ensure our voices, culture, drama, music and other communication forms are

allowed, encouraged and presented. The media people remarked to the Committee they had not been consulted until reading the U.S.F.T.A in spite of earlier assurances. It would seem a fairly typical approach throughout these negotiations.

Tariff cuts and job losses. Without relating the reductions it is obvious the harmful effects and displacement to our workforce. It is pure and misleading to refer to workforce mobility without considering the collective and individual consequences. Unthinking or mindless agreement could change what is a relatively peaceful and law abiding country into one of the worst social climates of countries where chaos and criminality are a direct result of bad social policy.

On Copyright our present laws are adequate and change by F.T.A would harm our libraries and educational institutions.

From various newspapers, media, pamphlets, internet, forums and attending Sydney public hearing I am convinced the proposed U.S.F.T.A is not in Australia's national interest.

It will not bring the benefits claimed by our government or the Ministers. We trade well with many countries including U.S.A, we must always leave our options open. Most importantly we must always ensure our governments and people will decide.

I urge the Committee to reject the U.S.F.T.A in its entirety.

Yours faithfully Ray Cox.