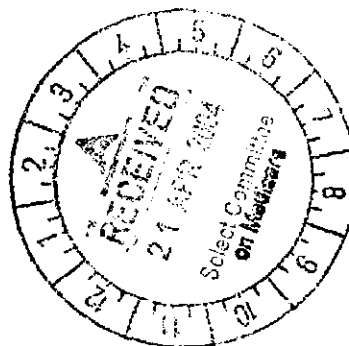Ariesta01@bigpond.com

Secretary
Senate Select Committee on the Free Trade Agreement
between Australia and the United States of America
Suite S1.30.1
The Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
AUSTRALIA

Email: FTA@aph.gov.au

Dear Sirs/Madams,

Being a user of Open Source Software should be sufficient to allow me to object to the way that the Free Trade Agreement in its present form is permitting encroachment on the freedoms that we, the users and developers of this technology now enjoy. Being one who also helps others, also introducing many to enjoy the great pleasure, versatility, lack of restriction, freedom, encouragement and ability to configure as they will their computers, without fear of prosecution or persecution. I feel a duty to request a careful and sensible review of the Free Trade Agreement especially pertaining to Open Source Software which is being jeopardized by the agreement in its present form.

There are corporate lawyers that can argue the points of law, and the information about how to best avoid the dangers inherent in the present documentation. These are also able to show what losses might be expected, and how these things will impinge upon business, large and small. But I wish to make the point that Open Source Software is what will make Australia both competitive and ahead of its time. Young Australians are being taken under the wing of this technology and making it their own, enjoying, without restrictions both the freedom and challenges that it encourages. The tools are included to make it the best and fairest software in the world. Allowing any of them to work with it without living in fear of encroaching on, or being prohibited from contributing. The source is not the only element supplied with Open Source Software, tools, advice and assistance is there aplenty, delivered with the operating systems, the programs and applications. This not only encourages, but almost singularly demands innovation. Never stifling this strong Australian trait as patents and copyright without options that exist in other software do. The inventors and developers of Open Source Software work with people and help them understand how and why things work. Simplifying the whole IT experience.

There is considerable danger that if Australia does not drastically amend some of the aspects that will impact on Open Sources Software in this Free Trade Agreement, we will destroy the innovation and activity of which Australia brings to all. Open Source Software must not be forced into a situation where

all those now using it, and those that are switching to its use day by day, will find themselves again without choice and their hands shackled to a high cost, and often not effective and troublesome alternative.

I will not quote the problems that I see and the notes that I have read on individual minefields where Australia will be hurt by this current agreement, because America by way of its constitution and such areas will make certain that compliance is one sided, not on its side but for its side. This is not the first or last time that Australia will be asked to give up something for a Free Trade Agreement, being so in name only. We who use and teach others, especially older people to use this cooperative technology also wish to retain a true freedom in Open Source Software. Without interference Open Source Software is working. It certainly offers a greater choice, and many are finding, a better option to that which is already advantaged too greatly.

Sincerely,

Charlie Schroeder.