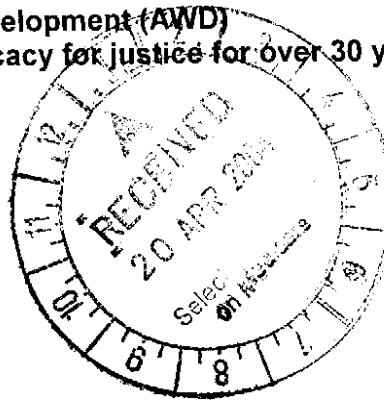


# AWD Aboriginal Justice Support Group

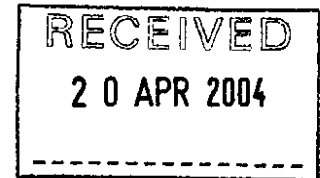
Action for World Development (AWD)  
Education and advocacy for justice for over 30 years



5 Harden Road  
Artarmon  
NSW 2064

April 10 2004

Senator the Honourable Peter Cook  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600



Dear Senator Cook

**Re: Australia –US Free Trade agreement; effects on Indigenous People**

Action for world Development, an ecumenical organisation, has been working for Justice for Aboriginal people for thirty years. We write to you now, in your capacity as Chair of the Senate Committee inquiring into the above Free Trade Agreement, asking your help.

Our concern comes from an article published in the Sydney Morning Herald of March 8 04 written by Professor Larissa Behrendt and Megan Davis, legal researchers at the Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning at the University of Technology, Sydney.

In the article they state that they are uneasy about the effects of the Agreement on Indigenous People, despite certain exemptions that claim to protect their interests. One exemption relates to government contracts for the health and welfare of Indigenous People about which the authors say ATSI communities are sceptical. Another, relating to investment issues, they say applies to goods and services but not to ensuring the protection of ATSI cultural, intellectual property and other rights.

They voice fears that the price challenges US drug companies can mount to PBS decisions will impact particularly on indigenous communities; as will the government's decreased capacity to enforce local content quotas in the media. As well, decreased government capacity to enforce environmental requirements may impede strategies like those to rejuvenate fish stocks or to redirect water interests and so bear on the well-being of indigenous communities.

We know your goodwill towards Indigenous communities and we ask you to do everything in your power to ensure that their interests under this agreement will be protected.

Yours faithfully

Joseph Castley  
For and on behalf of the Aboriginal Justice Support Group