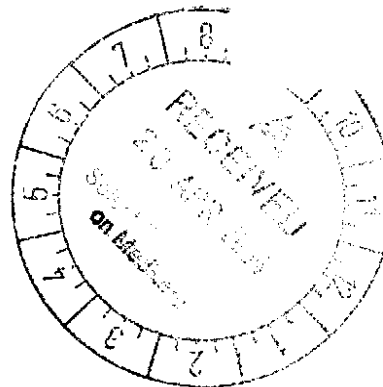


Senator Peter Cook
Senate Select Committee on the FTA
between Australia and the USA
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Senator,

I am an Australian writer who went to war twice to defend all things I hold dear that makes this country what it is. Sadly, many issues now cloud those things I once held dear. The final straw for me could be what I have just read in our Australia – US Free Trade Agreement. I am stunned at what we are about to sign away in this agreement that some aspiring comedian/s refer to as “free trade”.

According to my Macquarie dictionary, “free trade” is 1. ‘Trade between different countries, free from governmental restrictions or duties. 2. ‘International trade free from protective duties, etc., and subject to such tariffs as are needed for revenue’. This would make what we have signed with the US much less than “free trade” according to definition. Then, perhaps Macquarie has is wrong. After all, it is only an ‘Australian’ dictionary.

My principal objection to the “agreement” is that it gives away our cultural future by not defining it for all forms of media into the future. I am a published author and there are clauses in my author/publisher contract that, on several occasions, say: “by any means mechanical, electronic or digital, whether in existence or yet to be invented”, which seems to be what’s missing in this agreement in relation to the preservation of our media content.

The ratchet provisions of the “agreement” are my second major cause for concern. How our negotiators allowed a permanently erosive provision such as this is beyond comprehension. They were obviously under a good deal of pressure from our “friends” for this to occur or they are incompetent beyond belief. In either case, such a provision is ill founded and not within the national interest. When we see what comment is now emerging from the US regarding outcomes from the “agreement”, it leaves little room for wonder over who has been shafted here.

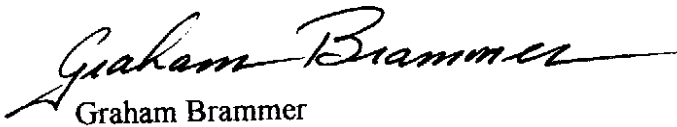
My final major issue is that future content provisions will not cover future broadcast mediums. This is unacceptable and all channels in all media forms must be subject to the current 55% transmission and 80% commercial quotas (at very least). There may be some exceptions to this; i.e., The history channel and one sport channel.

As this “agreement” is forever binding, we need to get it right or we need to get away from it. It is far better to give an “agreement” away than to give away our culture. Our culture is our identity and our identity is already challenged by a poorly conceived approach to multiculturalism.

The fate of future generations is in your hands and you were elected to act in the national interest. That this agreement is not in the national interest should be painfully obvious to anyone who takes the time to read the fine print. For these reasons, the Senate should ensure that legislation is not enacted to bring this cancerous embryo of cultural disintegration into being.

I have always been against the Senate blocking or generally tampering with perfectly sound legislation and abhor minor parties holding a balance of power in the house. However, I will watch the senate vote on this "agreement" with interest and adjust my vote accordingly at the coming election. Sadly, this may well be the first election that I cast a vote for a different party in the Senate than I do in the House of Representatives.

Yours Most Respectfully,



Graham Brammer