



19 April 2004

Senator Brandis
Senate select committee on the FTA between Australia and the USA
Parliament House,
Canberra ACT, 2600

Dear Senator,

I am writing to you as both a writer and an individual with a strong interest in the welfare of this country and all its inhabitants. This will sound like a cliché, and as a writer I am very conscious to avoid this kind of thing, but this is my first letter of a political nature, and what drives me to write are my deep concerns for the future of our culture and all that means for the fabric of our country. I am having a great deal of difficulty in seeing the foresight in signing on to an agreement that locks in current philosophies into all future decisions. In saying this I am referring to the ratchet provisions that form part of the FTA. While I can see how this may apply to certain areas of commerce, I believe that most people would question whether the cultural practices that have been laid on the negotiating table fall into this category.

As an individual I am uncertain of what changes future technologies will bring, as I am sure are most people, and I wonder if it is in the best interests of ourselves or future generations to take away our ability to respond to change as it arises. As a consumer I am sadly disappointed at the quality of programming on both free to air television and pay TV. I see this as a by-product of the economics of the industry, and only see the quality falling further with less regulation. I am also led to believe that due to the changing face of the public broadcasters, their future directions and options will be impeded by some of the ambiguity in the legalities of the FTA. I am certain that any anomalies will work more in the favour of the US than ourselves.

I am not a person who prescribes to party politics. My interest lies with the greater good and am more than willing to support anyone who demonstrates to me that they have this Nation's best interests at heart. I admit to questioning a number of the decisions of the current government, but of all the issues facing us as a nation I see none as more important than our identity. And this is what is at stake at, what seems to me, to be one of the most precarious moments in our nation's short history. I would implore you to take all these factors into consideration before you or any of your colleagues sign away our future. Any of the changes you make may be irreversible

Thanks for your time,

Mark Enders

