

To Senate Select Committee on FAT:

I wish to protest in the strongest terms about the terms of the FTA. I'm deeply disturbed at implications for pharmaceutical costs and for the environment: particularly the latest news from the Argentine where GM modified plants have produced feral weeds with devastating results. Canada under NAFTA lost control both of GM free crops and the use of more benign fossil fuels than American companies wanted to sell: Ontario's safety laws were over-ridden in the courts because of NAFTA and a US oil company reaped billions of public Canadian money.

But the focus of my concern here is cultural. Australia has a tremendous heritage in films, literature, local TV. It is frightening that this is an area where the US is most intransigent. Clearly, they want to swamp us culturally, over-riding our local content regulations. We will lose hundreds, thousands of jobs for local actors, writers, producers. To say this will give us more choice of programme is nonsense: channels will compete for more numbers at minimal cost which will mean more of the mediocre same from Hollywood. Our language, our cultural heritage, our awareness of self will be swamped.

I find it extraordinary that an Australian Government did not stand firm on this issue, the very thing that defines our 'Australianness' whereas it did stand firm on other matters. To allow our culture to be put on the table is no more than cultural treason.

I trust the Senate Committee will condemn the FTA in general, and the position the Government has taken on cultural issues in particular.

Yours sincerely,