

Dear Sir or Madam at the Senate Select Committee on the FTA,

I am writing from Dubbo, NSW to protest about the Government's attitude to USA's demands on the so-called Free Trade Agreement.

You might think that country Australia will be whole-heartedly behind the loosening of barriers on our primary produce. But we are also thinking people who value Australia's independence. I, and many other formerly steady conservative voters, are aghast at the devil-may-care attitude with which the Government is throwing away our right to decide our own cultural future.

It may be, that well into the future we will be satisfied with 55% of TV being Local content. But if we are not, then we must be able to decide year by year, how much local content to insist upon. This is nobody's business but Australia's.

I expect the USA pointed out how important the Film industry is to them. Did we point out how important the sheep industry? the cattle industry, the dairy industry is to Australia, and then seek to limit their production in those areas?

If Labour and the minor parties have the strength to topple this bill in the Senate, many ordinarily Conservative voters will cheer their courage and reward them with a vote in the coming election. Whether they/we will permanently abandon the Conservatives will depend wholly on Labour's performance during the next term.

One of the bulkwarks of Conservatism is Australia's independence and sovereign rights to make its own decisions. If the Government makes the mistake of giving this away for trade dollars, then long-time Conservative voters will abandon them. There is always China and India over the horizon who are unlikely to demand such a price.

June Duncan Owen