

Secretary
Senate Select Committee on the Free Trade Agreement
between Australia and the United States of America
Suite S1.30.1
The Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
AUSTRALIA

Dear Sir,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the enquiry into the Free Trade Agreement and its implications for Australia.

We write as concerned citizens who two years ago returned from several decades living in the United States, and have been very impressed by how well the Australian Pharmaceutical Benefit Scheme works in its present form. Any change which would invite outside objections to particular choice or cost of medications would seem a hindrance and indeed an unnecessary intrusion upon an area of successful Australian autonomy. Among those who who admire the scheme are the nine Democratic members of the US Congress who wrote last January of their concern that drug prices would rise here under an agreement. Our present Scheme could be a pattern and inspiration to other nations, not something we would voluntarily weaken.

Australian content is one reason for the local media's solidity and excellence. The Free Trade Agreement seems not to guarantee a definite share of new and emerging types of entertainment to local content, a deficiency we may come to regret in future years when these new media are more familiar.

Does this proposed trade agreement contain provision for foreign companies to sue if Australian laws impact to an agreed extent upon their profitable operation? The concern has been raised in various newspaper articles. Any concession of the kind, if proposed, would surely not be imaginably to our advantage.

We are also concerned that major changes may happen without people having enough clear, detailed information. Little was available as the agreement was being written. There has not been much public awareness and debate. The inquiry

and public meetings are a good step.

Yours sincerely,

Morag Hollway

Alan Miller

Andrew Miller