

Dear Senate Select Inquiry committee members,

Please accept this email as my submission indicating my support that the committee find the Senate should NOT pass legislation enabling the FTA.

In 1971 I attended a seminar conducted by the American consumer advocate, Ralph Nader. During the evening, he defined the nature of a third world country primarily as one which sold its resources to the highest external bidder. Other options a country had to best use its resources were: to import expertise to develop the resource for the benefit of that country, or to use its own expertise to develop the resource for the benefit of the country.

Presently, Australia is once again exhibiting its worst possible 'global lack of confidence' in embracing the FTA, at a time when our rural producers are going to the wall because of climate change and perceived 'lack of viable market places' and the people who live here are daily being limited in their options for fresh, affordable food. All our best is once more, going overseas (read lamb, fresh seafood, who knows what else?) whilst our own orange and pineapple and banana growers (and sugar producers) are struggling and throwing food away and the consumer is offered processed products of inferior quality at comparatively high prices from overseas.

Living now in regional Queensland (in Nambour, Sunshine Coast, where the sugar mill has just shut down, and hectares of agricultural land is either now lying unattended or being battled over for subdivision), still having the ability to shop at local, fresh markets and with true access to the best of what this country freely offers, I realise the value of what we already have even more. And what we are losing.

Already, we are accepting (genetically modified) products from the US which are refused by third world countries. Why? Because of our trade agreements, the lack of commitment this Government has to the true value of this amazing country and its belief that we are 'second cousins' to the US (or the UK, take your pick). We have fresh air, fresh water, an amazing natural environment. Our rural industry is virtually free of disease and our products (almost) uncorrupted. We have a Department of Primary Industries etc with amazing, creative expertise. Of course America wants this, as most of its rural land has disappeared under the influence of huge corporations solely for the motivation of PROFIT at the same time as the environment has been destroyed to the extent that chemical and biological interference is now their apparent only resort. The whole world could be well fed by the resources we (the western world) have available to us, if only greed was removed from the equation.

The GST has already seriously impacted on the quality of life we experience here to an extent not revealed prior to its acceptance. **I implore you to make a recommendation to not allow this government to implement another irreversible, damaging action which will not only severely impact on our future economic health, but our physical one as well. I hope the wonderful place we live in today will still exist for the grandchildren of our young people. We must act NOW to facilitate this.**

Gail Podberscek

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