

Dear Senate,

I apologise in advance for the rushed nature of this submission.

I am deeply concerned about the nature of FTA's for many reasons. I will list the main reasons why I disagree with FTA's and try to be as concise as possible.

1. Neo liberalist economic thought: It is obvious that blanket privatisation is not the answer to any nation. It is time that we spent more time developing alternative economic theories. A look at structures such as the Japanese regional production networks make it obvious that economic growth at the cost of state control is in fact detrimental to our long term economic interests as a nation.

2. The WTO and IMF connection: As a country we should be looking very carefully at who we choose to do business with. Signing FTA's locks us in to rules outside of our domestic laws and hence takes away the right for us to implement our laws and regulations. If there is any doubt about this, all the evidence of this can be found by looking into the history of the WTO's dispute process. Every single environmental law that has been challenged by states and companies in the Dispute Settlement Process (DSP) of the WTO has been ruled a barrier to trade. This essentially means that any domestic law can be overturned by the DSP. This is also the case for Union movements and workers rights.

3. The Parliamentary Process: The people of our nation have never been given the opportunity to vote on whether or not they would like to be part of the WTO, or indeed be part of FTAs. There is very little information given to people on these organisations and as such it is against any of our democratic rights. FTAs are negotiated outside of the normal parliamentary process, and this combined with the DSP, make our rights as voting citizens essentially null and void.

It is for these and many other reasons that I not only strongly object to the signing of the AUSFTA but to Australia's membership within the WTO. I feel ashamed that we are part of an organisation that actively keeps 80% of the world in poverty, just so that we can control their trade, especially their natural resources. Instead of haggling over a trade agreement that is so obviously to our detriment (you would have to be a complete fool to think that the U.S would give us an equal deal anyway), we should be spending more time on developing an economic policy that is truly fair, not just necessarily "free".

Sincerely,

Willhemina Wahlin