

I write to register my complete and unequivocal disagreement with the proposed free trade agreement between the United States and Australia for the following reasons:

- First and foremost, the proposed agreement will work to the disadvantage of most Australians, creating greater disparities of wealth. This is because the bottom line of the free trade is the market – a market that pays no heed to human cost. The proposed free trade agreement is not economically beneficial, nor will it be in any way beneficial for the Australian community. By removing trade barriers, we are globalising markets that in many cases should remain local for the good of the community.
- Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme – the proposed incursion on the current PBS scheme by raising the cost of Australian drugs. This is unacceptable – it is vital for pharmaceuticals to be available at an affordable cost for the community, not simply a money-making opportunity for pharmaceutical corporations.
- Culture: The incursion of the free trade agreement on local content laws within media, television and the arts will destroy our local cultural production, inundating us with the American market.
- Sugar cane: The Howard government promised that sugar would be included in the deal – this is not the case, demonstrating the lack of good faith in the negotiations and yet another turn around.
- Education and training – opening up our education system to a free trade system will completely impose American culture and values on unique localised education. It will increase the cost of education and turn our education system even further into a market-driven bottom line industry rather than a vital and public part of our community.
- Finally, if the Free Trade Agreement goes ahead, there will be no way of undoing the damage. The repercussions of the agreement are massive, in particular the effects on our legal system, culture, politics and social values. It must not be allowed.

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