

Dear Members of the Senate Committee inquiring into the Free Trade Agreement,

My primary objection to the proposed Free Trade Agreement negotiated between the Federal Government and the United States administration is that Australian culture has been erroneously assumed to be part of Australian trade. If we negotiate away our ability to determine the levels of Australian content on our media, our children will grow up thinking that real life and interesting stories happen elsewhere in accents other than our own.

I am writing as an actor member of the Media Entertainment & Arts Alliance to urge you to ensure that you vote/find against all legislative changes required to give effect to the proposed Agreement.

The free trade agreement negotiated between the United States and Australia puts strict limits on the ability of Government to respond to future changes. These limits include: 1. The Government may not impose local content requirements on most pay television channels; 2. Of those pay television channels where the Government may act to impose local content rules the level of local content is set at very low levels, in no way similar to the current free to air television rules; 3. The Government will never be able to regulate existing media (unless currently regulated) for local content. This means cinema (including e-cinema) may never be regulated; 4. The Government may not begin to act to introduce rules for interactive media until the level of access for Australian audiences to local production is already found to be at unacceptably low levels. There is no ability to take pre-emptive action.

Any free trade agreement we enter into should ensure that Australia remains free to respond to changes as and when it sees fit.

Australia must be free to introduce any new measures at any point in time and for all technologies to meet Australia's cultural objectives as our Governments determine them. The Federal Government did secure such an arrangement in the Singapore/Australia Free Trade Agreement.

Please vote/find against any and all legislative changes required to bring this proposed agreement into effect.

Yours faithfully,

John Adam