



The Senate select Committee on the USFTA
Suite S1.30.1,
Parliament House
CANBERRA. 2600

Dear Sir/Madam

At a meeting of the Central Coast Branch of the Friends of the ABC held on Saturday April 3rd, it was resolved that this branch asks that your committee recommends to parliament that the cultural elements of the Free Trade Agreement being negotiated with the USA be excluded from the agreement.

The present regulations governing Australian content vary markedly between free-to-air and pay television and are capped at present levels without provision for increases in these quotas

The significant difference between the 55% Australian content for free-to-air and 20% for subscription television must discriminate against free-to-air when the cost of Australian productions are weighed against imported American programs. In this situation, to compete with a growing market for pay television, the free-to-air stations will demand release from the 55% quota so that they can remain financially viable. Under the proposed agreement once these quotas are reduced they cannot be restored.

Any reduction in Australian content quotas can only result in decreased opportunities for Australian artists and technicians and a dilution of our characteristic Australian culture.

We fervently hope that your committee will give every consideration to this submission

Yours faithfully

John R. Hale Convenor for the Central Coast Branch of FABC