

Committee Secretary
Senate Select Committee on AUSFTA
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Madam/Sir

Submission on the proposed Australia-United States Free Trade Agreement

We would like to register our strongest objections to the so-called Free Trade Agreement, because it is not what it purports to be, namely "free". A deal that leaves out one of our main agricultural products, sugar, altogether and doesn't fully include beef for 18 (!) years, just to mention the most obvious omissions, would more accurately be described as "restrictive". We would lose any credibility we had when criticising EU and US farm subsidies, if we finish up subsidising our sugar producers as a result of this deal, thus compromising our position in future WTO negotiations.

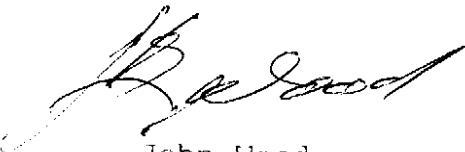
Australia's competitiveness in "the world's most dynamic and richest economy" (a point the government likes to stress) does not only depend on tariffs and quotas but largely on the exchange rate, which this deal does nothing to return to more favourable levels.

We object to an agreement, any agreement, entered into by a government that may not be in government in the near future, which is binding not only on any new government, but also on future generations of Australians, to the point of leaving us open to court action not only by foreign governments, but also by multi &/or transnational corporations!

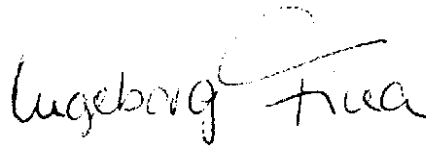
There is no doubt that Australia's numerous and diverse interest groups will have differing perceptions on what constitutes the "national interest". Our overwhelming concern is with the consequences other US "Free Trade Agreements" of this nature have had in other countries, South American generally and Argentina in particular.

We are profoundly worried that by entering into this deal with the United States, who have left us in no doubt about their own paramount national interest, we will be signing up to a similar fate.

Yours sincerely



John Wood



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28 April 2004