

From: Denise Sawang
Sent: Wednesday, 7 April 2004 8:48 PM
To: FTA, Committee (SEN)
Subject: submission re USFTA



submission to
senate inquiry.d...

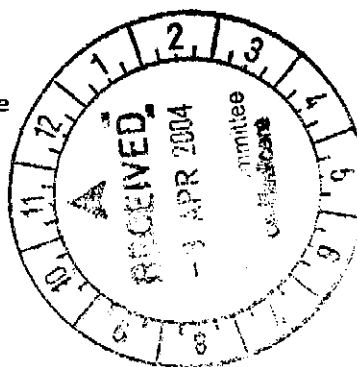
Dear Secretary

Attached please find my submission with regards to the
USFTA for the relevant Senate Committee's
consideration.

Thank you

Sincerely

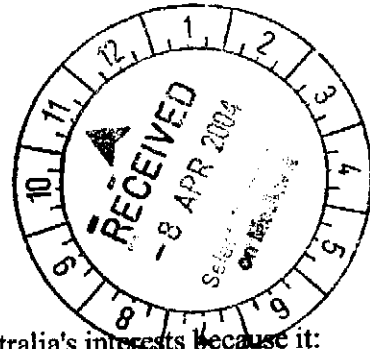
Denise Sawang



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From:

Denise Sawang



I believe the proposed US-Australia Free trade agreement is not in Australia's interests because it:

- **limits** Australian content rules for new forms of media, and allows the US government to challenge these rules as a barrier to trade. Under Annex 1, Australia's existing local content quotas are "bound", and if in the future they are reduced, they cannot later be restored to existing levels. This limits the capacity of future governments to respond to new circumstances
- **adopts** US copyright law, leading to higher costs for libraries, schools and universities by extending the copyright period for which copyright payments must be made until 70 years after an authors death. The USFTA denies Australians the right of public debate in the area of extending the copyright, weakens price controls on medicines by allowing drug companies to seek reviews of decisions by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee. The US trade representative, Robert Zoellick, has reported to the US Senate that under the UCFTA, Australia's drug prices will rise,
- **sets up** a new joint policy committee which gives the US government a voice in Australian medicines policy based on US trade policy, not on the Australian policy of access to medicines for all. The inclusion of this committee in the USFTA ensures that the US government can challenge future government medicines policy on trade grounds
- **"binds" or freezes** many areas of state and local government regulation at existing levels and limits the ability of governments to make new laws and policies on essential services like water, **outlaws** government purchasing policies that give preference to local products or require US contractors to form links with local firms to support local employment,
- **has a disputes process** which enables the US government to challenge many Australian laws and regulations before a trade tribunal on the grounds that they are too burdensome for business or a barrier to trade.
- **limits** the powers of the Foreign Investment Review Board to review investment in the national interest, so that 90% of US investment will not be reviewed, and
- **sets up** joint committees based on US trade policy to give the US government a say in quarantine and regulation of food labelling. The USFTA regards Australia's labelling of GE food as a barrier to trade. Removing the labelling under a UAFTA would deny Australians the right to choose to avoid eating these foods. The USFTA even states that the Australian Government will recommend that Australian non-government bodies should also let US government representatives have the same rights as Australian citizens to participate in Australian NGO processes for developing standards for Australia. These inclusions ensure that trade obligations with the US are high on the list of priorities when regulations are being made. This would weaken Australia's right to protect its own interests if they were in conflict with US trade,