

Secretary
Senate Select Committee on the Free Trade Agreement
between Australia and the United States of America
Suite S1.30.1
The Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
AUSTRALIA

The Australia US Free Trade Agreement is definitely **not in Australia's national interest**.

The agreement makes no consideration of social harm that may arise as a result of the agreement. The agreement is clearly in the interest of a select group that will benefit financially, and is not in the interest of the wider Australian community.

Australian regulations that prohibit the selling of alcohol at corner stores and in supermarkets may be challenged because it is a barrier to trade. Similarly, will Australia's banning of internet gambling be seen as a barrier to trade?

The agreement pushes Australia to adopt American regulations and standards. If Australian regulations and standards are seen as too rigorous by the United States this will be seen as a barrier to trade, and Australian regulations and standards will be challenged. The agreement permits the United States to have input and a decision making role in any review of Australian regulations and standards and the Australian public may not be invited to take part in the process. The dispute process should at the very least consider submissions from the public, the decision should be made public, and there should be provision for appeal if there is to be any degree of transparency.

The definition of "public service" is ambiguous. Does this include childcare and aged care? Many services in Australia are increasingly provided by the private sector. If the service is not seen as a "public service" it is not protected from a potential review of regulations and standards if it is seen as a barrier to trade with the United States.

Not-for-profit organisations and community organisations should be protected from any challenge of their regulations to ensure that their services can continue to be provided in Australia unhindered. There seems to be no such provision.

I have not seen any employment studies conducted to assess the impact of the removal of the tariff on motor vehicle parts, and the phasing out of tariffs on assembled motor vehicles and clothing. What will happen to the employees of regional manufacturing companies such as the motor vehicle parts factory in Taree? Australia already has a problem with employment in regional areas, and NSW has its own government departments to encourage people and businesses to relocate from the city. The agreement would have the opposite effect.

Australian businesses would no longer be able to have a policy of "buy local", or "buy Australian", as this would be seen as a barrier to trade by the United States. Again, there is the potential for a hugely detrimental impact on local jobs.

The agreement is too restrictive in relation to Australian media, and Australian media programming content on television and radio.

Australian regulations and standards have been devised or adopted and implemented by Australians. It should be kept that way for the benefit of all Australians.

Leanne Perdriau

