

Submission to Senate Select Committee on the USFTA

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am concerned that the proposed US-Australia Free Trade Agreement (USFTA) is not in the national interest of this country, nor would any implementing legislation be.

My concerns with the USFTA may be summarised as follows:

- (i) economic benefits to Australia from the agreement are unclear
- (ii) the USFTA dispute process limits democracy
- (iii) the USFTA will lead to higher costs for medicines, via review of decisions of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, the operation of a joint US-Australia Medicines Working Group based on commercial principles, and changes to patent laws could delay access to cheaper medicines
- (iv) extension of copyright means higher costs for libraries and education bodies
- (v) restriction on regulation of investment and services
- (vi) less rights to review foreign investment
- (vii) less rights to regulate essential services, including water services and Telstra
- (viii) US influence on quarantine, genetically engineered food labelling laws and crop regulation, and the environment
- (ix) restrictions on Australian content rules in new media
- (x) job losses from tariff cuts and changes to government purchasing rules.

In view of these widely-shared concerns, I believe that the Committee should recommend that the Senate not pass enabling legislation in support of the USFTA.

Please note that this submission represents the views of the author, and should not necessarily be taken as representing the views of the State Revenue Office Victoria or any of its staff.

Yours sincerely,

Gustav Lanyi