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# NSW TEACHERS FEDERATION

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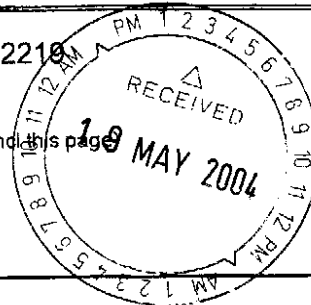
TO: The Secretary  
OF: Senate Select Committee on the Free Trade Agreement  
FROM: Barry Johnson  
DATE: 19 May 2004  
RE: USA/Australia Free Trade Agreement Submission

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## Agreement on Professional Services (Chapter 10 Annex)

This section is the greatest threat to public education in Australia.

The thin-edge-of-the-wedge optimism on the part of the United States is derived from the section of the Agreement on Professional Services (Chapter 10 Annex). In it, the parties agree to establish a **Professional Services Working Group** to facilitate encouragement of "the relevant bodies in their respective territories to develop mutually acceptable standards and criteria for licensing and certification of professional service suppliers and to provide recommendations on mutual recognition to the Joint Committee. "

That a "professional service supplier" could well be a teacher is made clearer in the next paragraph, which states that these "standards and criteria may be developed" with regard to numerous matters. Those most likely to be relevant to education are shown below.

"(a) education – accreditation of schools or academic programs"

**Comment:** that is, for a school or academic program to be accredited, there may have to be a standard "acceptable" to the United States.

"(b) examinations – qualifying examinations for licensing, including alternative methods of assessment, such as oral examinations and interviews."

**Comment:** For a teacher to be deemed qualified ("licensed") there may have to be agreement about the types of examinations, assessments and interviews undertaken.

"(c) experience – length and nature of experience required for licensing"

**Comment:** This could mean agreement about training course length and practicum.

"(d) conduct and ethics – standards of professional conduct and the nature of disciplinary action for non-conformity with those standards

(e) professional development and re-certification – continuing education and ongoing requirements to maintain professional certification."

"(f) scope of practice – extent of, or limitations on, permissible activities"

## **Conclusion**

The NSW Teachers Federation these provisions of the USAFTA as a threat to the integrity of the provision of public education in this country, and urges rejection of the Agreement by the Parliament of Australia.