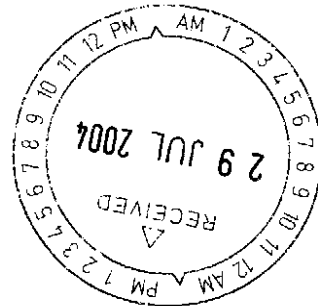


27 July 04.

Chair,  
Senate Select Committee FTA,  
Parliament House,  
Canberra,  
ACT, 2600.



Dear Senator,

I enclose copies of a letter to Mr Latham together with a response from my local member Nicola Roxon. There was no other acknowledgement or response. Would you please present this to your committee for consideration.

May I again urge you to dismiss this deal: there may or may not be a financial benefit - there's certainly doubt; it does not work in the direction of international equity and outlook, or in preserving our Australian identity.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Ray Birch'.

(Ray Birch)

*P.S. I note the US has just recently added another bi-lateral agreement to its list.*

16 Electra Street,  
Williamstown,  
Victoria, 3016.

7 June 04.

Hon. Mark Latham MP,  
Parliament House,  
Canberra,  
ACT, 2600.

Dear Mr Latham,

May I urge you and the party to vote against the proposed 'free trade' agreement.

Briefly:

- Bilateral agreements between two nations can be mutually beneficial, but others may be adversely affected: a poor country may lose a market for example.
- No agreement is absolute; among a number of nations the one who has arranged many bilateral agreements, say to ensure supply of a needed exotic, is in a better position to re-negotiate or break one of them if that one becomes an embarrassment, pertinent or otherwise.
- The nation with lots of bilateral agreements - trade or other - may be less constrained to be cooperative in areas of international concord.

For a better world, multi-lateral, preferably international agreements are appropriate. Idealistic perhaps, but please be wary of seeming cosy arrangements of two.

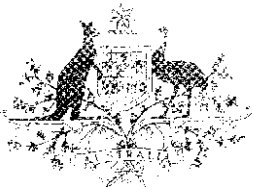
Yours sincerely,



(Ray Birch)

Copy:

Hon. Kevin Rudd,  
Senator Stephen Conroy,  
Nicola Roxon MP



**Nicola Roxon MP** Federal Labor  
Member for Gellibrand

9 June 2004

Mr Ray Birch  
16 Electra Street  
Williamstown 3016

Dear Mr Birch

Thank you for your letter regarding the Australia-US trade deal finalised by the Howard Government on 9 February 2004.

Labor believes that the World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations, in which 146 countries participate, offers the greatest potential for Australia to secure reductions in trade barriers confronting our exporters. Gains from the WTO will far outweigh any gains we will derive from any bilateral trade deal, including a deal with the US.

The Howard Government has not secured a free trade agreement with the US. It has agreed to a trade deal that is unlikely to free up trade in significant areas of Australia's economy. The text of the trade agreement can be downloaded at [www.dfat.gov.au](http://www.dfat.gov.au).

The US Congress is allowed 3 months to scrutinise the trade deal. It is fair and reasonable that the Australian Parliament be given a similar opportunity. Labor has therefore referred the deal to a Senate Select Committee for thorough examination.

A key focus of the Committee will be to examine in detail the content of the trade deal to assess whether it is in Australia's national interest. Through the Committee process, Labor will determine its final position on the deal against the following national interest criteria.

The deal must deliver significant and comprehensive benefits to Australia in agriculture in a reasonable period of time. The deal leaves out sugar and it will take 18 years to get the increased level of access on beef. It is difficult to see how the deal could be considered comprehensive but the Committee will canvass a range of views on this issue.

Electorate Office

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The deal must deliver significant employment and investment gains for Australia's manufacturing and service industries. The deal must not undermine the ability of Australian Governments to provide and regulate essential services in health and education, including the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

The deal must not undermine the capacity of Australian Governments to protect Australian culture by regulating for local content in the future delivery of audio visual products. And the deal must not undermine Australia's access to Asian markets (the primary destination for our exports) or our WTO and Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) objectives.

One of the key aspects of the deal on agriculture that warrants close attention is the possible impact on Australia's negotiating position in the WTO Doha round of trade negotiations. Australia has always opposed the protectionist argument put by a number of countries that agriculture is a 'special' product in international trade and therefore needs to be given special treatment in the form of protection.

The exclusion of sugar from the US trade deal may strengthen the determination of Japan and the EU to keep their highly protected agricultural markets closed. This could make it harder to open those markets for Australia's farmers.

The Government's suggestion that the trade deal would create a \$4 billion benefit for Australia has been undermined by the exclusion of sugar and a range of other factors, including the recent appreciation of the Australian dollar.

Thank you for your interest in this matter. I have attached for you some additional information which sets out in more detail Labor's approach to the trade agreement.

If I can be of assistance to you on any issues please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Yours sincerely



Nicola Roxon  
Federal Member for Gellibrand