

Free Trade Letters

Response by Hon Mark Vaile MP (Minister for Trade) to a letter from Jill Keogh

13 June, 2003

Dear Ms Keogh

Thank you for your letter of 12 May 2003 concerning possible implications for Australia's cultural policy of the negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the United States.

In its statement of objectives for the FTA negotiations, which I announced on 3 March, the Government expressed its commitment to preserving its ability to regulate in relation to social and cultural objectives. Accordingly, the Government will ensure that outcomes from the FTA negotiations do not undermine Australia's ability to meet fundamental policy objectives in a range of areas including health care, consumer protection, cultural policy, quarantine and environmental policy. Specifically the Government will ensure that the negotiations take account of Australia's cultural and social policy objectives, and the need for appropriate regulation and support measures to achieve these objectives.

The Government has been consulting extensively with stakeholders from Australia's cultural sector on how best to achieve the above objective and will continue to do so as the negotiations proceed.

Thank you for your interest in this issue.

Mark Vaile