

20 April 2011

## **TRADE POLICY REVIEW - VALUES HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPARENCY**

“It might not be everything that we would want, but the Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) welcomes recognition by the Minister, Craig Emerson, and the Gillard Government of the social, environmental and health impacts of unfettered free trade,” according to Dr Deborah Gleeson spokesperson for the Association.

“We do have some concerns that the policy does not fully take into account the impacts that free trade can have on human rights and social development, but believe that the government has responded to the concerns that our Association and its networks have raised,” she added.

The PHAA particularly recognises the significance of setting the following policy parameters in the policy statement, *‘Trading our way to more jobs and prosperity’* in which the government has committed to:

- preserving the ability of the Australian Government to legislate for important social and environmental policy issues;
- excluding investor-state dispute resolution provisions that would give foreign investors the right to sue Australian governments on issues such as cigarette plain packaging;
- excluding provisions that could undermine the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme; and
- ensuring greater transparency in trade negotiations, including regular consultation with community groups and parliamentary scrutiny of proposed trade deals.

“It is pleasing when governments take into account the views of community on health, social and environmental issues. The PHAA is particularly pleased that this policy provides the grounds for resisting the US government in the current Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement negotiations with regard to plain packaging of tobacco”.

“We note that the PACER Plus trade agreement with the Pacific islands was not included in the list of trade priorities in the report, and continue to encourage the Government to explore avenues other than free trade agreements for assisting development in the Pacific island countries.”

“Our Association congratulates the government and the Minister for this balanced report,” concluded Dr Gleeson.

The *‘Trading our way to more jobs and prosperity’* policy statement is found at:  
(<http://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/trade/trading-our-way-to-more-jobs-and-prosperity.html>)

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