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## AFTINET Bulletin 102, 23 September 2004

If you would like to contribute to the Bulletin, please contact Louise Southalan via email at [lsouthalan@piac.asn.au](mailto:lsouthalan@piac.asn.au) or on (02) 9299 7833. Our website is <http://www.aftinet.org.au>.

### Contents

- 1. China / Australia FTA: Sydney seminar 23 November**
- 2. Australia / Malaysia FTA Scoping Study: Call For Submissions by 15 October**
- 3. ASEAN, Australia, New Zealand look to 2007 pact**

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### **1. China/Australia FTA: Sydney seminar 23 November**

AFTINET will be involved in organising a lunchtime seminar on the proposed China agreement on 23 November in Sydney at NSW Parliament House. Further details will be provided in future bulletins. We will also produce a short publication about the issues.

DFAT announced recently that the feasibility study into the proposed China/Australia FTA will be completed earlier than had been planned. It will now be finished in April next year. DFAT has advised that they will continue accepting submissions and comments on the study until then.

For further information contact DFAT's China FTA Study Taskforce:

E-mail: [chinafta@dfat.gov.au](mailto:chinafta@dfat.gov.au)  
Fax: (+61 2) 6112 2468  
Post: China FTA Study Taskforce,  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade,  
R. G. Casey Building, John McEwen Crescent,  
BARTON ACT 0221

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## **2. Australia / Malaysia FTA Scoping Study: Call For Submissions by 15 October**

DFAT media release, 19 August 2004

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is inviting public submissions and comment on issues relevant to the Australian scoping study for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Australia and Malaysia.

At the Australia-Malaysia Joint Trade Committee Meeting on 26 July 2004, the Trade Minister Mark Vaile and the Malaysian Minister for International Trade and Industry, Dato' Seri Rafidah Aziz, agreed that the two countries would "conduct parallel scoping studies of an FTA between Australia and Malaysia".

The studies are to be completed in the first quarter of 2005. They will provide a basis for the Australian and Malaysian Governments to decide whether to proceed to negotiate a bilateral FTA.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will consult widely on the Australian scoping study, which will assess the economic costs and benefits for Australia of an FTA. It will discuss implications for economic welfare, trade, investment, commercial links and competitiveness. It will also examine the implications for the agricultural, mining, manufacturing and services industries.

The terms of reference for the study and related information can be found on the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's website at [www.dfat.gov.au/geo/malaysia/fta](http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/malaysia/fta)

The deadline for receiving submissions is Friday 15 October 2004.

Submissions may be lodged electronically to [malaysia.fta@dfat.gov.au](mailto:malaysia.fta@dfat.gov.au) or by post at the following address:

Australia-Malaysia FTA Scoping Study  
Trade and Economic Analysis Branch  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
BARTON ACT 0221  
Telephone enquiries: (02) 6261 3220  
Fax: (02) 6261 2696

Media Inquiries: DFAT Media Liaison on 02 6261 1555

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## **3. ASEAN, Australia, New Zealand look to 2007 pact**

JAKARTA (Reuters): Southeast Asian nations, Australia and New Zealand hope to conclude a free trade agreement (FTA) by 2007 after beginning formal negotiations next year, Australian Trade Minister Mark Vaile said on Sunday.

Economic and trade ministers from Australia, New Zealand and the 10-member

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) agreed to negotiating principles for an FTA during a meeting in Jakarta.

Vaile said the ministers' recommendation that negotiations begin in 2005 and be concluded within two years would go to ASEAN heads of government for formal approval at a meeting in Laos in November.

"It is incredibly important that we move to this much higher level of integration within our region," he told a group of reporters.

"I don't see any major obstacles at this stage. There will be issues obviously in the course of the negotiation that we need to address ...Obviously there will be requests for phased implementation of some of the measures."

In April, ASEAN proposed launching free trade talks with Australia and New Zealand. Vaile said studies showed that an FTA could bring an estimated total economic gain to the 12 countries involved of some A\$48 billion annually.

Two-way trade between just Australia and ASEAN in merchandise and services totaled more than A\$40 billion (\$28 billion) in 2003.

ASEAN consists of Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines, Brunei, Laos, Myanmar, Malaysia and Cambodia with total annual trade worth more than \$720 billion. ASEAN leaders agreed last year to transform the region of nearly 500 million people into a giant EU-style free trade zone by 2020.

On Friday, their economic ministers agreed tariff and non-tariff barriers in 11 sectors should be removed by 2007 by ASEAN's six most developed members -- Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Brunei, Indonesia and the Philippines -- and by 2012 by the rest -- Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar.

An Australian trade official said last week in Canberra that once an Australia, New Zealand and ASEAN FTA agreement was finalized, it could take a decade to fully implement.

Australia has long sought free trade with ASEAN but had to settle in 2001 for talks on a closer economic partnership -- a looser trade framework short of tariff cuts.

Australia has already signed free trade deals with Singapore, Thailand and the United States and has agreed to carry out studies into the possibility of free trade agreements with Malaysia and China.