



AFTINET
Australian Fair Trade
& Investment Network Ltd

Level 3, Suite 3B, 110 Kippax St
Surry Hills, NSW, 2010
Phone: 02 9212 7242
Fax: 02 9211 1407
Email: campaign@aftinet.org.au
ACN 097 603 131
ABN 83 659 681 462
www.aftinet.org.au

::For Immediate Release::

28 March 2008

Chile FTA would contravene Government's Trade Policy

“Australia’s conclusion of negotiations with Chile for a Free Trade Agreement without consideration for the social, environmental and regional implications of this agreement is in direct contravention of the Labor Government’s Trade Policy” stated Fair Trade Advocate Adam Wolfenden.

The negotiations between Australia and Chile concluded yesterday with an agreement to remove tariffs on all goods, and lock in current levels of liberalisation for services and investment.

In its National Platform the Labor Government made a policy commitment to ensure that negotiations for trade agreements will include assessments that should consider “the economic, regional, social, cultural, regulatory and environmental impacts which are expected to arise”

However Adam Wolfenden from the Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network warned that the wide ranging commitments made in this agreement have taken place in a vacuum of awareness for the social, environmental and regional impacts

“Australia has committed away its space to decide what’s in its national interest when it comes to the regulation of services and investment, potentially jeopardising our delivering of essential services” said Mr Wolfenden.

“By committing all services except those we specifically exclude we have committed ourselves to a future with less regulatory control over domestic services” continued Mr Wolfenden.

The negotiations have included an Investor-State Disputes Settlement process, a mechanism that allows private companies to challenge directly any regulation or law that they believe may be breaching the agreement.

“An Investor – State Disputes Settlement mechanism leaves both Australian and Chilean domestic law open to challenge by private companies, we’ve seen the disastrous impacts this has had overturning environmental and health law under the North American Free Trade Agreement” explained Mr Wolfenden

“The conclusion of these negotiations comes at a time when the Government is in the middle of its review about Australia’s trade agreements. The Government needs to wait for the outcomes of that review before further binding Australia’s regulatory capacity” concluded Mr Wolfenden

**For more information contact: Adam Wolfenden, AFTINET Campaigner
Ph: 02 9212 7242 / 0401 045 536**