



Sutherland Shire Environment Centre

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Submission to the Inquiry into Australia's activating greater trade and investment with Pacific island countries

March 20, 2020

To whom it may concern,

Please accept this submission by Sutherland Shire Environment Centre on the Inquiry into Australia's activating greater trade and investment with the Pacific island countries.

Sutherland Shire Environment Centre (SSEC) has a 30-year history of working to protect the environment and advocate for sustainability. It values healthy environments, healthy communities, and economies that contribute to sustainability.

Please accept this submission as an endorsement of the recommendations made by the Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network in its submission to this inquiry. SSEC also adds the following points.

In the past decade, Pacific island governments have repeatedly stressed the need for Australian policies – domestic and international – that seriously address the climate change crises; they want to see policy shifts that will mitigate climate change, the effects of which are being felt badly on the islands. Those island governments recognise quite clearly that trade agreements as they are crafted benefit Australia's economy and do not address the threat that climate change poses to the Pacific islands' very existence.

SSEC urges the Federal Government to re-focus its energies on forging new climate change policies to reduce climate change emissions and on providing increased support to the Pacific islands to manage the very real and very immediate impacts of climate change. SSEC urges the Federal Government to stop pressuring the Pacific island governments to sign the PACER Plus agreement and, instead, work to re-establish supportive and strong relationships through meaningful climate change policies and actions.

SSEC believes that all economic and trade negotiations must take into account the special needs of developing countries, as exist in the Pacific. Those agreements must be founded on a respect for democratic processes, human and labour rights, trade justice and protection of the environment.

Yours faithfully,

Tassia Kolesnikow

Chair, Sutherland Shire Environment Centre