



Level 7, 321 Pitt Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Phone: 02 9699 3686
Email: campaign@aftinet.org.au
ACN 097 603 131
ABN 83 659 681 462
www.aftinet.org.au

MEDIA RELEASE

April 2, 2022

AFTINET condemns secretive process and calls for full cost-benefit analysis of India-Australia trade deal

The Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network of community groups has today warned that the “early harvest” trade deal between India and Australia must be independently evaluated to scrutinise both the costs and benefits for Australia.

The signing and release of the text just before the election and is due to be called and after parliament has risen will also avoid any parliamentary scrutiny of the text until after the election.

Representing more than 60 community organisations, trade unions, environmental organisations, public health and faith-based groups, AFTINET has criticised the deal for being highly secretive, with little chance for the community to contribute to the negotiation process.

AFTINET Convenor, **Dr Patricia Ranald** said:

“A recent Joint Standing Committee on Treaties report [recommended](#) independent cost-benefit analysis of all such trade deals.”

“As usual the text is only being released after signing, and the devil will be in the detail. There will be no parliamentary scrutiny until after the election. The public deserves an independent assessment the true social, environmental, health and economic costs and benefits of this agreement before it is ratified”

“Australia and India have been in on/off negotiations over the last decade. This early harvest agreement was negotiated in haste driven by the recent closer defence and security ties with India. It covers trade in goods services, and temporary migration. But there are no agreed enforceable standards to protect the workers’ rights and the environment. Increased competition through expansion of trade without such minimum standards can drive a race to the bottom on those standards. The need for such standards is made more urgent in the face of the climate crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic, which has increased global inequality.”

“AFTINET will conduct a full analysis of the text and make a public submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties (JSCOT) inquiry into the agreement when it is called.

Contact

Dr. Patricia Ranald, AFTINET Convenor: 0419 695 841 campaign@aftinet.org.au