



**AFTINET**  
Australian Fair Trade  
& Investment Network Ltd

128 Chalmers Street  
Surry Hills, NSW, 2010  
Phone: 02 9699 3686  
Fax: 02 9699 3717  
Email: [campaign@aftinet.org.au](mailto:campaign@aftinet.org.au)  
ACN 097 603 131  
ABN 83 659 681 462  
[www.aftinet.org.au](http://www.aftinet.org.au)

**Media Release**

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## **ALP and Greens MPs reject Korea Free Trade Agreement after Parliamentary Committee review**

“The Joint Standing Committee on Treaties has issued conflicting [reports](#) in its review of the Korea Australia Free Trade agreement (KAFTA)”, Dr Patricia Ranald, Convenor of the Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network, said today.

“The government has a majority on the committee, so it is no surprise that the majority report, although critical of aspects of KAFTA, recommends that Parliament should pass legislation to implement the agreement. But even this majority report contains strong criticisms of KAFTA clauses which enable Korean investors to sue Australian government for damages if a domestic law or policy is claimed to harm their investment, known as Investor State Dispute Settlement or ISDS. The majority report is also critical of changes to copyright law which would favour the rights of copyright holders over consumer rights,” said Dr Ranald.

“The dissenting report from ALP MPs Kelvin Thomson and Melissa Parke reaffirms ALP policy against ISDS, citing strong evidence presented to the committee that ISDS would undermine democratic legislation. This report notes that many governments are reviewing ISDS and that submissions to a European review found that proposed safeguards in the US-European Transatlantic agreement would not prevent cases being taken against health and environmental legislation. These safeguards are far more extensive than the ones proposed in KAFTA, and reveal that the KAFTA safeguards are not adequate”, explained Dr Ranald.

“This report also recommends against changes to copyright law which would favour copyright holders over consumers, forcing Internet service providers to report and punish consumers who breached copyright law. This would involve legislation to override a High Court decision. It recommends that such a major change in copyright law should be fully debated through the Parliamentary process, not rushed through as part of implementing a trade agreement,” said Dr Ranald.

“Greens Senator Peter Whish-Wilson’s dissenting report rejects KAFTA, citing provisions on ISDS and copyright, impacts on employment in manufacturing industry and argues for the release of the text of trade agreements for parliamentary debate before they are endorsed by Cabinet”.

“We congratulate the authors of the dissenting reports for taking a stand against foreign investor rights to sue governments and the extension of copyright. These issues have nothing to do with free trade, but are about increasing corporate monopoly rights at the expense of the democratic rights of citizens and consumers,” said Dr Ranald.

“We hope that the coming Senate inquiry into KAFTA will enable a thorough critical review of these issues based on the public interest,” added Dr Ranald.

**The ISDS issues will be debated at an AFTINET seminar at 12 midday today at level 2, 321 Pitt St, Sydney.**

Contact Dr Patricia Ranald 0419 695 841