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MEDIA RELEASE

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Trade deal ads hide truth on jobs, investor rights as China FTA rules begin

“As the China FTA rules begin from December 20, the glossy government ads about “export trade deals” hide the truth about the real impact on jobs, and democratic sovereignty for future regulation in the public interest,” Dr Patricia Ranald, Coordinator of the Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network said today.

“A recent assessment by the [Australia Institute](#) confirms that the government’s [own commissioned study](#) of the impact of the China, Japan and Korea in FTAs shows they will result in just 5434 additional jobs by 2035. This is because exports will only increase by 0.5%, but imports will increase by 2.5%, displacing far more jobs than will be created by additional exports. The gains from agricultural and services exports are small compared to the loss of jobs in manufacturing and other sectors,” said Dr Ranald.

“We hope that the changes to the [regulations of the Migration Act](#) will protect the rights of temporary workers entering Australia as a result of this agreement. But it is not clear that there will be additional resources for enforcement of these rights, despite the many [current examples](#) of workers on temporary visas being exploited. There is no mention of commitments by either China or Australia to workers’ rights or environmental standards,” said Dr Ranald

“We remain opposed to the inclusion of investor rights to sue governments over domestic laws, known as ISDS, which could result in Chinese companies like [Shenhua](#) mining suing state or federal governments over changes to environmental laws or refusal to grant a licence for environmental reasons. We note continuing concerns by consumer groups like CHOICE and industry groups like the AIG about the lack of improved monitoring of quality and safety standards for imported [food](#) and [other products](#),” said Dr Ranald.

“As the [Productivity Commission](#) has noted, glowing predictions of benefits to the economy as a whole from such agreements have not been delivered in the past. The clock will be ticking from December 20 on the actual job impacts and the impact on consumer welfare, democracy and sovereignty.”

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