

SUBMISSION TO THE REVIEW OF EXPORT POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

Overview

This submission to the Review of Export Policies and Programs conducted by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade seeks to assist the construction of a more strategic, whole of government approach to advancing all Australian and related regional interests together. It calls for a coordinated industry stakeholder and related community management focus on the need for sustainable development as the driving force of all production and trade. Some questions of the review are addressed later in this context.

However, to illustrate the generally recommended way forward, a submission to the current Review of the Automotive Industry is attached. This argues that all existing Australian automotive industry support mechanisms should be folded into the new Green Car Innovation Fund announced by the Australian Government and this fund should be appropriately broadened and renamed:

The safer, greener, planned transport innovation fund

A suggested automotive industry plan to attain greater innovation is discussed with the aim of assisting automotive industry and related fund goals to be pursued more competitively in more broadly coordinated Australian and related regional contexts. The ideal aim is to enable all stakeholders and their current or potential trading partners to achieve sustainable development and triple bottom line accounting – financial, social and environmental - as broadly and effectively as possible. This is ideally assisted by more openly planned management of funds to identify the outcomes of competitive project administration. The current poor alternative is to perpetuate many unrelated, bureaucratic, academic or related silos trying to pick winners to deliver small amounts of funds to, at great expense. This is a waste of money. The expenditure goals are wrong and are also unlikely to be met.

What factors are inhibiting Australian business from exporting?

Economic crises show the need for greater world governance, especially to manage 'public goods' like financial stability and environment development. Papers of the Annual Bank Conference on Development Economics (Stiglitz and Muet, 2001) reflect a new high level understanding that more planned investment approaches are necessary to assist markets to meet the economic, social and environmental aims of triple bottom line accounting. Hilmer's independent committee of inquiry into an Australian national competition policy in 1993 should have led naturally to a highly competitive approach to sustainable development and triple bottom line accounting. He defined competition as, 'striving or potential striving of two or more persons or organizations against one another for the same or related objects' (1993, p.2). However, this late twentieth century idea, that competition need not only be for money, has since been overlooked as a result of dysfunctional additions to older legislation such as the Trade Practices Act. Understanding what Hilmer's view of competition required but did not get the chance to achieve is necessary for positive change. It needs to be implemented to support sustainable development.

I also attach my submission to the Australia 20/20 Summit which answers all ten questions addressed at the summit, in order to provide a holistic understanding of how to treat all related problems of development. The conceptualization and delivery of services in secretive silos, rather than in coordinated, openly planned and clearly accountable industry and community contexts is a major development problem. Continuing, feudal, legal domination, which has not even advanced to being seen as social service, destroys the potential for rational administration and all related opportunities for quality management and more effective competition. The legal monopoly and culture need to be destroyed.

To what extent is Australia's information and communications technology infrastructure inhibiting export performance, particularly in the service sector?

A learning culture is needed to support innovation. Open and flexible education for sustainable development is necessary. Relevant open curriculum is also the most effective way of building skills quickly. The recent explosion of information technology means it is potentially easier for curriculum content to be disseminated through a wide variety of media and utilised quickly in related skills development. There is now a greater need and potential than ever for the rational development of open education content and for effective teaching and workplace based supervision to assist in the development and assessment of competencies. However, closed and theoretically driven collegiate cultures in universities, which are not coordinated effectively with other post-secondary education development, make this essential development impossible. This is generally reflected in multiple balkanised, closed and narrowly dysfunctional information technology systems.

Across the board industry benefits may be derived if industry leaders, their organizations and members participate in broader, more open, regional industry and community planning approaches which also address effective communication, education, skills development and research to achieve national objectives related to achieving sustainable development. This direction should also be supported by broadly available, clear and cheap risk management education and by making key skills development and related undergraduate curriculum content openly and freely available to all, so that research training for postgraduate students and others can be built more transparently and effectively on this clear basis of promotional and certifiable knowledge. An open curriculum approach would be the most obvious and effective way of developing many skills quickly and flexibly. It would be helpful for fighting inflation and for business and community innovation, development and cost cutting. The closed, computer-based, distance education initiatives which Australian universities have funded in the past are comparatively little utilized (Gallagher 2000; Nelson 2002), their production costs are more expensive than classroom teaching and they have not made money (Marginson 2004). These products are not open to scrutiny so their quality cannot be judged. Openness will improve it.

Part of the answer to developing globally innovative and competitive industries is to analyze and meet the entertainment and education needs of Australians and others together. Any person who watches television may often see films which would be great for teaching purposes. However, compared with the easy availability of books, the storage, availability and cost of films for teaching purposes is abysmal. When teaching at

Sydney University I also often tried to find suitably qualified postgraduate students to undertake large quantities of essay and project marking on a casual basis, but could seldom get anybody appropriate quickly enough because there was no effectively organized system for doing so. The employment of students by staff is made infinitely harder because of the generally poor and balkanized communication systems run by postgraduate and undergraduate students. The various research, teaching and administration services of the universities and the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) do not work together helpfully on their membership communication either. In general, I think that the service and productivity gains for students, staff and many others which could be derived from more effectively coordinated tertiary education, related communication and information technology management systems would be enormous. However, there is huge resistance to more effective cooperation. This is the result of so many collegiate cultures which determinedly ignore each others' perspectives in order to keep advancing their own narrow interests. Many dysfunctional collegiate clubs must be reoriented to serve society better.

Are multilateral trade negotiations, such as the current Doha Round under the auspices of the World Trade Organization the most effective way to open new markets and improve international trade rules? No.

As I understand it, multilateral trade negotiations are focused only on the achievement of reduction in trade barriers which are related to national industry protection. This reduction is necessary but needs to be undertaken in tandem with development of many regional consultative approaches which aim at achieving planned cooperation to attain community health and environment protection through sustainable development. If such openly planned and competitive approaches to regional development are not undertaken, the poor will resist reductions in barrier protection, for very good reason. They know that markets are not free and that apologists for free markets are often ideologues acting for the rich, to whose interests they are narrowly bound by career interests and obvious lies.

Enormous disparities in wealth which exist globally and within nations, plus the fact of economic booms and crashes, make it clear that the view that markets will clear if only governments do not tamper with them other than to prevent monopolies arising, is highly suspect, to say the least. Those with financial power enjoy markets that are systematically rigged in their own interests, and achieve this partly by denial of clear and truthful information, combined with urging less informed people into high risk behaviour. Achievement of powerful, sectional, financial goals are also assisted by rich personal networks, client legal privilege and related legal concepts. Life may die out if one waits for market clearing in the long run, as Keynes presciently pointed out. Poorer people are unlikely to thrill to the idea of collectively kneecapping themselves to please a few men in suits. The economist's idea, that perfect information is logically necessary for perfect competition, seems to have been conveniently forgotten by most contemporary economic ideologues. One only needs to look at universities to see why. They are run as rigged businesses for wealthy brotherhoods with a little 'noblesse oblige' thrown in 'pro bono'. Every teacher naturally follows suit, crying for smaller classes so that each narrowly opaque oral culture may be carried on as comfortably as possible for those delivering it.

What emphasis should Australia place on building coalitions with like-minded countries? A lot. See auto industry example of how to proceed, which is attached.

Are there new strategies or approaches Australia could be adopting to enhance its effectiveness in terms of opening new markets? Yes. See auto industry example.

Should Australia support or initiate proposals aimed at reforming the WTO with the aim of improving its effectiveness? Yes. The aim of the WTO needs to shift so that the removal of old fashioned barrier protection for industry is linked to regional industry and related community approaches aimed at achieving sustainable development broadly.

The first principle of the UN Rio Declaration on Environment is that humans are at the centre of concern for sustainable development and entitled to healthy and productive lives in harmony with nature. Australia supports global partnerships for development to achieve the UN Millennium Development goals which aim at eradicating poverty, hunger, disease and gender inequality, as well as achieving universal education, health and environmental sustainability. Related industry management models ideally should stress the importance of related, consultatively developed and broadly coordinated aims, supported by transparent service delivery to achieve these goals through related project outcome evaluation. Australian industry, communication, education, research and competition policy should be coordinated to assist communities and businesses to understand this direction, to achieve sustainable development as broadly as possible.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

Yours truly

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