

## What does globalisation mean to Australia?

### Anti-globalisation

Australian corporations participate in the oppression of workers and peasants in poor countries in Asia. Australian mining and forestry companies are involved in extracting wealth from countries such as Papua New Guinea, Irian Jaya and Indonesia, sometimes relying on military support to suppress local opposition.

The Australian support for trade liberalisation, particularly in agriculture, has been used to open up markets in poor countries where Australia's commodity exports put local subsistence farmers out of work.

Australia has opened its own markets to goods made in countries that allow child labour, or forbid the formation of free trade unions. The Australian government has opposed efforts to include environmental and labour protection clauses in World Trade Organisation agreements. Australia should support reform of the WTO to make it more equitable for poor nations of the world.

Australia places few restrictions on the operations of transnational organisations, which take wealth from the country, and are not managed in the interests of Australia.

#### Links:

Green Left an active campaigner against globalisation and includes resources on the subject on its website.

<http://www.greenleft.org.au>

The S11 Website put together to organise a blockade of the World Economic Forum meeting in Melbourne in September 2000 is still on line with a number of resources on globalisation and links to anti-globalisation campaigns around the world.

<http://www.s11.org/>

The Australian Manufacturing Workers Union web site includes material for its campaign for fair trade.

<http://www.amwu.org.au>

The aid organisation, Community Aid Abroad, makes a submission on the case Australia should be taking to the World Trade Organisation.

<http://www.caa.org.au/campaigns/submissions/wto/index.html>

Although a little dated, the proceedings from the conference, The Global Trap, conducted in 1998, include a range of speeches on globalisations effects in Australia.

<http://conference.socialchange.net.au/globaltrap/conference/>

"A quirky Australian site - <http://www.milkbar.com.au/> - presents a lucid critique of the forces of globalisation in the context of the quintessential Australian icon. It is linked to the site <http://www.globalhistory.cjb.net/> that has a broad range of short, left essays on the topic "How can we understand globalisation?"

Anti-media is a site run by Melbourne activists with resources and dissenting views on globalisation including those of anarchists. See it at

<http://www.antimedia.net/>

### Pro globalisation

Australia provides a text book case for the benefits of globalisation. In 1986 it unilaterally lowered its tariffs. As a result, exports have soared, particularly in newly competitive industries such as manufacturing. It is noteworthy that wages in the new export sectors of manufacturing a 25% higher on average than those that simply service the domestic market. Manufacturing has doubled its share of Australia's exports over the last 20 years.

Australia has a strong vested interest in further trade liberalisation, particularly in agriculture. Australia has made common cause with developing countries such as Brazil and Argentina to press for agricultural liberalisation, as this would have the benefit of opening American and particularly European markets.

It is estimated that if protection levels around the world were reduced by 50%, the benefit to Australia would be more than \$7 billion a year.

Australian companies investing abroad are helping to create employment and wealth in those countries, in the same way that foreign investment helps to create wealth here. For every dollar invested in Australia, 96 cents remains, including 50 cents in wages.

#### Links

Alan Oxley of the Australian APEC Study Centre has produced a powerpoint presentation on [Globalization and Australia](#)

Opening doors around the world is the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs Trade's page explaining the benefits of trade liberalisation.

[http://www.dfat.gov.au/trade/opening\\_doors/index.html](http://www.dfat.gov.au/trade/opening_doors/index.html)

The Australian government presented a report on the benefits of liberalisation in the Asia Pacific region to the 2000 APEC Leaders conference. It recently produced Investigating Globalisation through the APEC experience, a guide to using the publication in the classroom

<http://www.dfat.gov.au/apec/>

The Age newspaper published a feature on globalisation, including contributions from Paul Keating, Geoffrey Blainey, Michael Gudinsky and Natasha Stott Despoja. <http://www.theage.com.au/special/vision21/index3.htm>

The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry has a policy on trade liberalisation and globalisation.

<http://www.acci.asn.au>

The Australian APEC Study Centre's web-site contains a wealth of material on globalisation in a Asia-Pacific regional context.  
<http://www.apec.org.au>

Among the materials on the APEC Study Centre website is a study by Tas Luttrell assessing the benefits of APEC membership to Australia.  
<http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/ausapec/iss12.htm>

Alan Oxley, the Chairman of the Australian APEC Study Centre, is author of the book *Seize the Future: how Australia can prosper in the new century*, published by Allen and Unwin, 2000. A chapter, *The Global Nation*, is presented [here](#).

The Australian APEC Study Centre has developed a CD-ROM teaching and research resource on APEC for Australian students in years 11 and 12. Currently there is no material designed for secondary school students. The Kit explains APEC, the importance to Australia of economic integration Asian/Pacific nations, and the importance of harmonious relations with our Asian neighbours.  
<http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/ausapec/apeccd.htm>

Glenn Worthington, of the Parliamentary Library, provides a local perspective in Research Paper No. 27 2000-01 *Globalisation: Perceptions and Threats to National Government in Australia*. Find it at <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/rp/>

The paper explains perceptions of the economic, political and social threats posed by globalisation to national communities in general and the Australian community in particular. It concludes by outlining a response that adopts a middle way between the extremes of an unreserved embracing of globalisation and a full-scale retreat from the world.

*Globally Speaking*, a six part radio series on the politics of globalisation, covers its historical, business, and cultural aspects as well as looking at Australia's response.

It includes contributions from Chandra Muzaffar, a Malaysian Islamic scholar and human rights campaigner, Fernandez-Armesto, author of *Millennium - A History of the Last Thousand Years*, Claude Smadja, managing director of the World Economic Forum, Thomas Friedman of *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* fame, and critic Professor Richard Falk of Princeton University, author of "Predatory Globalisation - A critique".

Radio Australia and Victoria University contributed to <http://www.abc.net.au/global>