

Please quote: MN38707/SM18/ES/SA

Ms Terrie Templeton
14 Cecil Road
BARDON Q 4066

Dear Terrie

I refer to your e-petition lodged with the Clerk of the Parliament on 9 September 2003 regarding the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). My Government is aware of the community concern about the GATS and its perceived impact on the delivery of public services. However, it must be noted that trade negotiations are a Commonwealth responsibility.

The Commonwealth has consulted directly with the Queensland Government regarding the GATS. The Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee called for public submissions on the GATS and held a public enquiry in Brisbane on 24 July 2003.

The Commonwealth has publicly released details of its initial offer on the GATS on the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's website (www.dfat.gov.au). This information includes details of Australia's initial requests, along with World Trade Organisation member requests to Australia.

I have previously stated in Parliament that the Queensland Government will not support any proposal during the current negotiations that is not good for trade and the delivery of public services. The Queensland Government has provided the Commonwealth with comments on its proposed negotiating position and has sought to ensure that Australia's proposals are consistent with Queensland business and community interests. The Commonwealth has publicly reiterated that essential public services are not under negotiation.

The report on the Senate inquiry into the GATS will be released on 27 November 2003. I do not anticipate that I will be asked to make further commitments under the GATS before this date.

Yours sincerely

PETER BEATTIE MP
PREMIER AND MINISTER FOR TRADE