



Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation

2006/SOM1/CTI/FTA-RTA/016

Lessons and Experiences of Australia in Dealing with Issues Emerging from RTAs/FTAs Participation

Submitted by: Australia



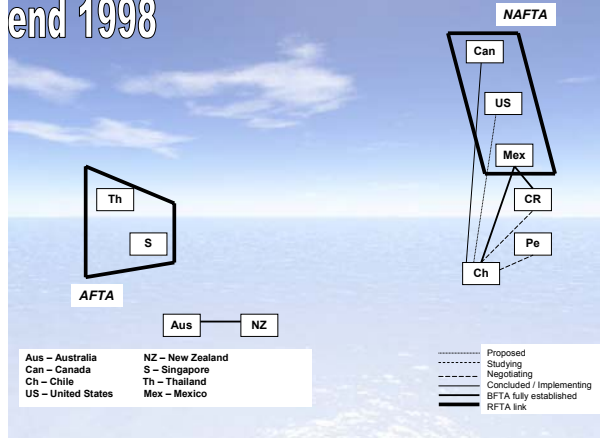
**APEC Workshop on Best Practices in Trade
Policy for RTAs/FTAs: Practical Lessons and
Experiences for Developing Economies
Ha Noi, Viet Nam
27 February-1 March 2006**



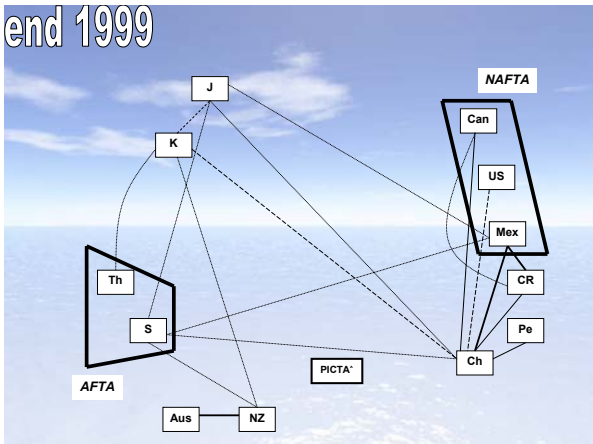
Australian Services Roundtable

Australia's Experience -A Business Perspective-

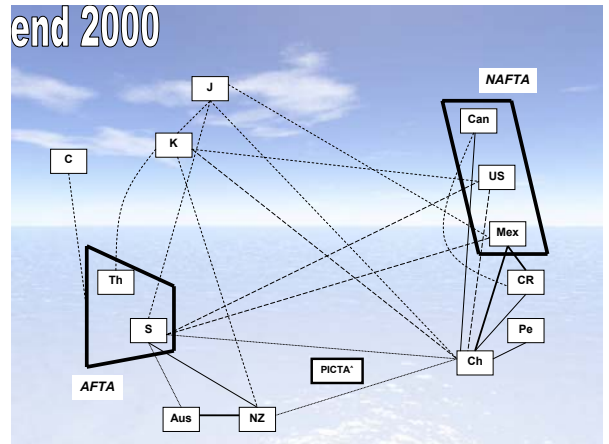
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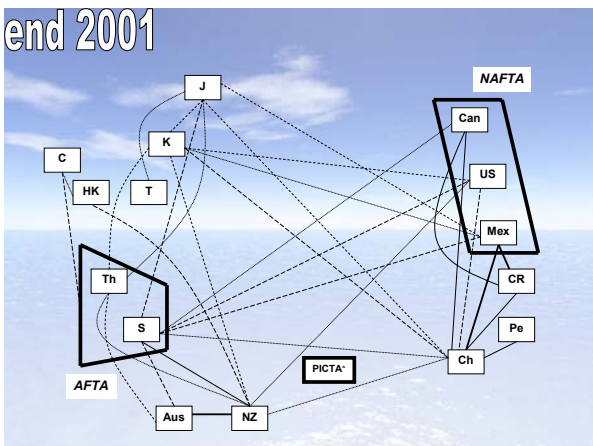
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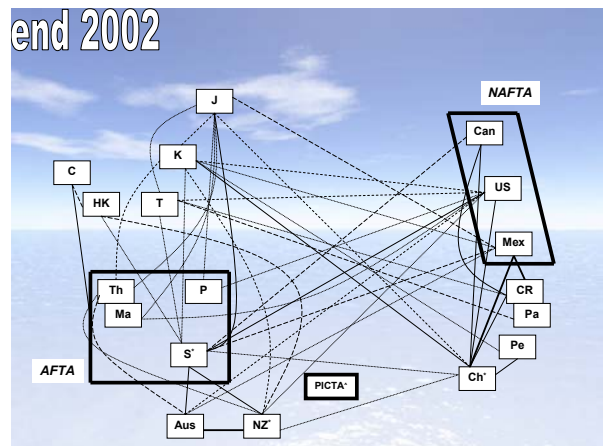
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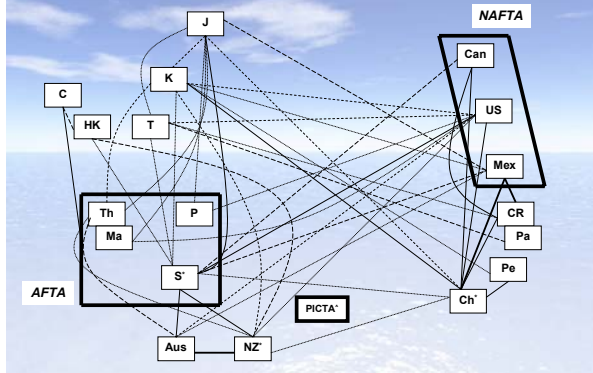
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Australian businessmen generally recognise that a positive outcome to the Doha Development Agenda is the top priority and will deliver the biggest gains to the world economy

But many businessmen think the WTO, and especially the GATS, is completely incomprehensible

Bilateralism, at least in principle, seems much easier for individual companies to understand and take a commercial interest in

At least until they try to actually read an FTA text!

The Australian Government has made a major effort at stakeholder consultation, though there is some evidence of "consultation fatigue" among business associations

The trade policy agenda is receiving much greater business and media attention, though real business engagement is uneven. The services sector is especially difficult to "consult" with

Business takes an interest in the choice of partner countries. The current negotiations with China, Malaysia and ASEAN as a whole are naturally of special interest

There have been some real anecdotal **success stories**, though it's probably too soon to measure actual new trade flows.

Major export promotion campaigns are underway to try to help Australian industry take advantage of the new doors that potentially have been opened.

There is also some scepticism regarding commercial "deliverables"

And there have been some real commercial **disappointments**

Prospective Agreements?

Australia/Malaysia – negotiations on Services have been lagging behind


Australia/NZ/ASEAN – Services risks becoming too complex for business to understand – potential hybrid of Positive and Negative Lists

Australia/China – Services are "sensitive"

Australia/UAE – Services is lagging behind
Goods

Australian businessmen, like their counterparts all around the region, try to work with Government to promote the benefits of more liberal trade and investment regimes throughout Asia Pacific

Business observes the proliferation and diversity of FTAs and wonders whether regional trade policy is fully coherent?



The business sector in Australia and elsewhere has an interest in APEC efforts to achieve best practice in FTAS and a greater degree of harmonisation in approaches

Domestically business is quite keen to work with Government to develop “model” texts. Australia doesn’t have a “template”

business basically wants

market integration

(not market fragmentation)