



THE CHINA FREE TRADE DEAL RISKS LOCAL JOBS, WAGES & CONDITIONS

Key findings from new academic research

A report released in October 2015 by Dr Joanna Howe of the University of Adelaide Law School, an expert in temporary labour migration, has vindicated the ASU and others' fears that the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA) seriously risks access to jobs for the local workforce, as well as undermining Australian labour standards.

The report 'The Impact of the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement on Australian job opportunities, wages and conditions' makes the following concerning findings:

- The ChAFTA greatly increases the access of Chinese workers to the Australian labour market at the expense of the local workforce.
- Chinese workers are vulnerable to exploitation and being used as a way of undercutting local wages and conditions, which is exacerbated by the under-resourced Workplace Ombudsman.
- Despite requirements that relevant awards are applied to Chinese workers, in many cases Australian workers are entitled to much better rates and conditions than awards due to enterprise bargaining (ie. market rates) - these labour standards are undermined by the ChAFTA.
- The current regulatory framework in place does not mandate labour market testing, market rates or appropriate levels of accountability and transparency to the Australian public.
- The ChAFTA attempts to prevent the Government's ability to regulate temporary labour migration programs, an important sovereign right.

We've all heard the business mantra about less Government involvement in the labour market but Dr Howe concludes "there is a strong case for government regulation to ensure that temporary labour migration is used to address genuine skill needs in the local labour market, without being used as a vehicle to unnecessarily increase labour supply and reduce local wages and conditions."

The ASU does not oppose trade agreements with China or any other country but we argue that as it currently stands, the ChAFTA is not in the national interest.

Report: <http://bit.ly/chafta-howe-report1510>



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Authorised by David Smith, Australian Services Union National Secretary, 116 Queensberry Street, Carlton South, Victoria 3053, www.asu.asn.au

Serious flaws in ChAFTA can be mitigated by Government to ensure Australia's labour regulation system is protected

Dr Howe makes it clear in her report that these serious flaws in the already signed ChAFTA can be mitigated by enabling legislation:

"Thus, it is vital that the ChAFTA's implementation be accompanied by enabling legislation that stipulates the application of labour market testing and market salary rates to Chinese workers, greater public accountability and transparency around investment facilitation arrangements and a substantial increase in the enforcement capacity and powers of the Fair Work Ombudsman."

In addition, with matching amendments to the Migration Act making labour market testing a requirement, access to jobs by the local workforce can be enshrined.

The ASU argues that ALL trade agreements, not just the ChAFTA, should be subject to a legislative requirement for labour market testing and payment of market standards in wages and conditions. To not do this seriously undermines the living standards we have fought for over generations, with exploitation of vulnerable foreign workers used by unscrupulous employers to whittle away our workplace standards.

What can you do?

1. **Email** your local MP and let them know your concerns: <http://bit.ly/mp-sen-details>
2. **Let your neighbours, workmates, friends and family know** what the deal with China is all about: **give them a copy of this flyer**
3. **Read about** others' concerns here: <http://bit.ly/150908-asu-chafta>

