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## **NEW REPORT: FREE TRADE CONSENSUS UNDERMINED BY GREEN GROUPS**

'With support from across the political aisle, Australia's trade policy is being distorted by green groups to achieve their backdoor political and environmental aims,' said Tim Wilson, Director of the Intellectual Property and Free Trade Unit.

Mr Wilson's comments follow the release of the new report released today, *Trading away competitiveness: Green priorities influencing Australian trade policy*.

'For the past thirty years Australia's trade policy has been focused on improving Australia's competitiveness and pursuing our comparative advantage by producing goods and services where we are most competitive', Mr Wilson said.

'Green groups such as Greenpeace, the World Wildlife Fund and Friends of the Earth are now influencing Australia's trade policy and increasing costs for consumers and our export-orientated industries with the support of all sides of the political spectrum.

'Australia no longer has a free trade consensus. Australia only has a no-tariff consensus. Meanwhile non-tariff trade barriers are increasing rapidly based on environmental, social and economic grounds.

'Green groups have successfully targeted politicians to push for laws that require developed world environmental standards for developing world primary industry imports that add costs. Green groups are also being supported by vested interest business and unions.

'These standards are having the effect of backdoor protectionism'.

'If green groups continue to influence Australian trade policy consumers will suffer from higher prices and export-orientated businesses will become less internationally competitive as they have to absorb higher prices. Further, developing-world primary industries, especially those in rural and regional communities and those who rely on them for their livelihood, won't be able to export into markets like Australia competitively.

'Green groups are also targeting retailers to leverage their market power in an effort to force signals up the supply chain that squash competition, reduce access to cheaper goods and add costs.

'Politicians have to realise green policies have economic costs for Australian consumers and industry, as well as developing world communities', Mr Wilson said.

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