



Sutherland Shire Environment Centre

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BITreformsuggestions@dfat.gov.au

Dear Officer in Charge,

Submission on ISDS mechanisms in Investment Treaties

The Sutherland Shire Environment Centre (SSEC) understands that the government is reviewing Australia's Bilateral Investment Treaties with Argentina, Pakistan and Türkiye.

Please accept this as a firm request to remove the ISDS provisions from each of the bilateral treaties.

SSEC is a community-based organisation that has been actively advocating for the environment in the southern region of Sydney for over 30 years. [REDACTED] I make this submission on behalf of the SSEC Board because we appreciate that government policies and agreements have implications for environments and communities everywhere.

SSEC's key priorities are the protection and enhancement of environment quality and the promotion of best-practice management for the natural areas in the Sutherland Shire and its bioregions. Integral to these priorities is the need to protect the strength of democratic processes at local, state and national levels.

In earlier submissions, SSEC has pointed out that ISDS provisions emasculate democratic decision-making and open the way for serious environmental destruction. ISDS provisions can enable the impoverishment of communities, the destruction of pristine and valuable natural places, and the diminution of workplace conditions.

We acknowledge the positive step taken by the Australian Government in recognising that damage can be inflicted on communities and the public interest through ISDS provisions. Here, it is not necessary to explain further how the ISDS provisions work against communities. Example after example can be found that highlight the real costs and the real damage caused by ISDS.

Environment, workers' rights, human rights, climate change, medicine and health can all come into

the ISDS firing lines. Other countries are recognising the threat of ISDS and are withdrawing from treaties or removing the provisions from trade agreements.

SSEC believes the Australian Government should promptly remove ISDS in order to prevent exposure to massive financial compensation claims from companies that are using or manipulating the provisions for their economic advantage.

Yours sincerely

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