

Submission re SAFTA - Law Faculty, University of Tasmania, 12th April 2016

Support for expanding free trade through expansion of recognition of Law degrees in Australia

We support the recognition of approved LLB, combined LLB and JD degrees; we believe students should have a choice in the format of their Law studies, within national accreditation standards. Many Law graduates seek to enter legal practice but many also use their Law degree for a range of law-related non-practicing careers and roles. Recognition of diverse law degrees promotes flexibility for graduates in their future career choices.

Australian Law Schools operate in an established regulatory environment through the Commonwealth TEQSA and the national professional legal accreditation requirements. We note the voluntary certification process, underway through the Council of Australian Law Deans.

We would be opposed to any attempt to decrease the number of Australian Law schools that are recognized.

We have no objection to having more Australian Law Schools recognized in Singapore. We would be concerned if there were to be a decrease in the number of Law Schools currently recognized in Australia.

Making the case for continued recognition of UTAS Law degree in the event it is not possible to expand the number of Law Schools recognized

If it is not possible to expand the number of approved Australian Law degrees, we would favour and support the retention of the 10 existing recognised Law Schools, which includes our Law Faculty at the University of Tasmania.

May we reiterate the merits of our individual case for continued recognition. The Law Faculty at the University of Tasmania is the 4th oldest in Australia, and has a long tradition of excellence in research and teaching. The University of Tasmania Law degree was recognized in Singapore in 2005 with enrolments commencing in 2006. Since 2006, 88 Singaporean students have graduated, 21 with honours. This honours record is consistent with our non-Singaporean graduates. The Law Faculty maintains recruitment standards in the quality of our entrants. Additionally, we offer our international students unparalleled opportunities for support and integration. We have a national award-winning program of support for our international students – the International Student Support Program, (ISSP) providing dedicated academic and pastoral support. Each year, 10-20% of the tutors appointed for this program are Singaporean students. Our Singaporean students provide leadership in the Faculty. For the last three years, two of the Presidents of the student Tasmanian University Law Society (TULS), have been from Singapore. TULS has an International Student Support Officer on its Committee, which has generally been filled by a student from Singapore. The wider University of Tasmania has a Singaporean Student Society with many of our Law students acting as office holders.

As a recent objective measure of the quality of our graduates, two of our graduates are Australian High Court associates in 2016 and a third will be an associate in 2017- an impressive achievement given our small graduating classes. In research, we are ranked as 'above world standard' in national excellence in research Australia (ERA) rankings, despite being the smallest Australian Law School to achieve this ranking. Many of our staff have received teaching awards, including national awards. Four of our academic staff have been elected Fellows of the prestigious Australian Academy of Law.