



Tariff (PACER Plus) Amendment Bill

54—1

Report of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee

July 2018

Contents

Recommendation.....	2
About the bill	2
Submitter's comments.....	2
Green Party minority view	2
Appendix.....	3

Simon O'Connor
Chairperson

Tariff (PACER Plus) Amendment Bill

Recommendation

The Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee has examined the Tariff (PACER Plus) Amendment Bill and recommends by majority that the bill be passed without amendment.

About the bill

This bill seeks to implement a trade and development agreement, the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus, which was signed in Tonga in June 2017. The bill would amend the Tariff Act 1988 and the notes to, and Part II of, the Tariff.

Specifically, the bill would enable the application of preferential tariff rates for parties to the PACER Plus agreement. It would also amend the rules on “goods re-entered after repair or alteration” in the Tariff.

The Customs and Excise Regulations 1996 would be amended to give effect to the rules of origin applicable to imports into New Zealand that originate from PACER Plus parties.

Submitter’s comments

The New Zealand Federation of Business and Professional Women submitted on the basis of their partnerships with Pacific Island nations such as Fiji, Papua New Guinea, and Vanuatu. They noted that, although trade can be a catalyst for gender equality, and trade in general has improved women’s empowerment and livelihoods, there have been cases where the benefits to women have been marginal and lower than those gained by men. The Federation wants women to be a major part of any discussions around PACER Plus.

We note that submissions were received from a variety of organisations and individuals before the agreement was signed, and consultations were held with a range of interested stakeholders. We understand that there will be specific consultations with women’s organisations as part of the Trade for All consultations.

We note that the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee of the 51st Parliament considered and reported on the PACER Plus agreement in August 2017.

Green Party minority view

In accordance with and with reference to its expressed minority view during the PACER Plus International Treaty Examination in the term of the 51st Parliament, the Green Party recommends that Parliament oppose the passage of this bill. We remain concerned that, among other considerations, the PACER Plus agreement undermines efforts to promote Pacific regionalism, reprioritises New Zealand’s existing aid budget into problematic “aid for trade” initiatives, and burdens Pacific states with unfair export rules.

Appendix

Committee procedure

The Tariff (PACER Plus) Amendment Bill was referred to the committee on 11 May 2018. The closing date for submissions was 21 June 2018. We received and considered one submission from an interested group. We heard oral evidence from this submitter at a hearing in Wellington.

We received advice from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, and the New Zealand Customs Service.

Committee members

Simon O'Connor (Chairperson)
Golriz Ghahraman
Hon Willie Jackson
Hon Tim Macindoe
Hon Todd McClay
Chris Penk
Louisa Wall
Dr Duncan Webb

Advice and evidence received

The documents that we received as advice and evidence are available on the Parliament website, www.parliament.nz.