



17.04.2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Safeguard Submission – Importation of Fabricated Structural Steel

I am writing to provide a submission regarding the impact of imported fabricated structural steel on small, locally owned fabrication businesses.

1. Business Overview

- **Company Name:** Buttler Engineering Pty Ltd
- **Location:** Campbellfield, Victoria 3061
- **Business Size:** 4 employees

Buttler Engineering Pty Ltd is a family-owned structural steel fabrication company that has been operating continuously since 1975. At our peak, we employed up to 15 staff, including qualified boilermakers, apprentices, and labourers.

Our core work has traditionally included the fabrication of structural steel for factories, warehouses, schools, insurance repair projects, and residential extensions. We have also regularly supported larger fabricators by undertaking overflow work to assist them in meeting project deadlines.

2. Current Challenges

Over the past three years, our business has faced significant challenges, with staffing levels now at their lowest since our establishment.

While we may not typically compete directly with overseas fabricated steel suppliers due to the smaller scale of our projects, we are nonetheless experiencing indirect but serious impacts from increased imports.

These impacts include:

1. **Increased Competition from Larger Fabricators**
Larger steel fabrication companies, facing reduced workloads due to competition from imported fabricated steel, are moving into smaller-scale projects. This has resulted in direct competition with businesses like ours, significantly reducing the availability of work within our traditional market segment.
2. **Loss of Overflow Work Opportunities**
Historically, we have relied on overflow work from larger fabricators during peak periods. However, due to their reduced workloads, these opportunities have largely disappeared, removing an important supplementary income stream for our business.

3. Business Outlook

Given the current conditions, we have no plans to expand our workforce or invest in productivity improvements, as the available workload does not justify such commitments.

4. Conclusion

While imported fabricated steel directly affects larger fabricators, there is a clear and significant flow-on effect to smaller businesses. Reduced activity at the top end of the industry cascades down, intensifying competition at lower levels and diminishing opportunities for small, long-standing operators like ourselves.

This situation threatens the sustainability of small fabrication businesses that have supported the local construction industry for decades.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission.

Yours sincerely,

Brett Buttler
Director
Buttler Engineering Pty Ltd