

10th February 2003

Elizabeth Macpherson

Vic

The Commissioner
Textile, Clothing, Footwear
and Leather Inquiry
Productivity Commission

To the Commissioners,

I work at Godfrey Hirst in Geelong. This is a factory that makes carpet and employs a large amount of people.

I am concerned that later this year your government may reduce tariffs in the TCF sector, which would mean that post 2005 is a time we will fear. Every time tariffs have been reduced in the past twenty years a lot of TCF workers have lost their jobs as a result. Many workers are unable to find new jobs.

I need to work but finding employment is hard in my local area, I am in my forties, which makes it difficult to get employment. If my factory closes or downsizes and I need to find a new job, but cannot, then my family would suffer. I would not be entitled to any unemployment benefits because my husband works. We rely on both wages to survive as we have three children to provide for. But other workers would need to access government support. The Government should support local industry and local jobs otherwise people would have no choice but to access unemployment benefits and other organisations for help and assistance.

If there were factory closures in Geelong then this would impact on other factories also the community as a whole as the flow on effect would be devastating.

I urge you to consider the costs, it is the workers of Australia that will suffer, and we will see companies go off shore, downsize or close. How can you justify destroying our industry by unfair playing fields? There has been research done to verify that this is true (Sally Wella, University of Melbourne).

Thank you

Elizabeth Macpherson