



## Will small business benefit from Gillard's Trans-Pacific Partnership FTA?

Servcorp's Marcus Moufarrige says only if the deal provides the IP and commercial protections that Australian business needs

Sydney, 16 November 2011 With the Gillard government heralding its recently announced Trans-Pacific Partnership free trade deal, Servcorp CIO and Sales Director and small-business champion Marcus Moufarrige today warned that the deal was unlikely to deliver for Australian small businesses if it did not focus on protecting intellectual property and innovation while strengthening commercial law.

Servcorp is one of Australia's leading exporters, having won the 2011 Innovation in Export Award at the NSW Premiers Export Awards after the biggest expansion year in the serviced and virtual office providers history.

Moufarrige said his concern was that while the deal was certainly welcome news it would focus too much on manufacturing and agricultural sectors, while neglecting the needs of the well-performing services arena.

Many Australian small businesses are not necessarily farmers or manufacturers, he said. And while help for those sectors is required, if the deal is to have a broad economic impact the focus must be on services as well.

He cited intellectual property protections, as well as trade and legal frameworks, as must-haves for any agreement struck between the nine nations currently prepared to sign on to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) deal.

What Australian businesses who export want are assurances that their rights and properties will be protected in TPP countries, Moufarrige said. That means IP and copyright protections, as well as guarantees around the rule of commercial law, from business registration right through to litigation.

Moufarrige said that if the deal did not contain such measures, its benefit for Australian small businesses would be minimal.

In the TPP deal, the government has a great chance to make challenging markets, such as those of Malaysia and Vietnam, much safer export destinations, he said. He pointed to Australia's 2009 revised agreement with Singapore as a prime example of what could be achieved when law and intellectual property were emphasised in free trade deals.

Moufarrige

warned that the deal could not be one which simply appeased fast-growing economies in the region. Rather, it must provide tangible benefits for Australia and Australian businesses, he said.

The

cost of labour and the cost of living, coupled with initiatives such as the carbon tax, mean that Australia will no longer be the manufacturing base that it's been in the past, he said. By ensuring that the concerns of service exporters are at the forefront of the agenda, the government has the opportunity to build the export frameworks of the future. Moufarrige called on the government to ensure that it kept the needs of small businesses and exporters top-of-mind as the details of the deal were worked out in 2012.

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About Servcorp

Servcorp is the world's second largest provider of managed workspace solutions and is viewed as the market leader in premium serviced offices and virtual offices. Founded in Sydney in 1978, Servcorp now operates a growing international network of 100 prime city locations. Servcorp's clients range from Fortune 500 companies to small and medium-sized businesses and solo practitioners all over the globe. A Servcorp Serviced Office is a fully managed corporate office space situated in a prime city building. It includes dedicated answering services and reception staff; access to a worldwide network of meeting spaces and boardrooms; secretarial support on hand and exclusive access to an online portfolio of business services and tools.

A Servcorp Virtual Office gives clients access

to the presence; facilities and services of a Servcorp Serviced Office including virtual addresses, phone numbers and meeting rooms whilst they work from home or alternate locations.