

TOM DASCHLE

U.S. Senator for South Dakota

320 North Main, Suite B
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
605-334-9596

320 S. First Street, Suite 101
Aberdeen, SD 57401
605-225-8823

<http://daschle.senate.gov>

1313 West Main Street
Rapid City, SD 57701
605-348-7551

Washington, DC 20510
202-224-2321
1-800-424-9094

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 3, 2004

Contact: Ted Miller
Reid Cherlin
(202) 224-0224

Daschle Meets with Australian Prime Minister

Senator addresses agriculture-related issues and Australia's role in military efforts

Washington, DC – In a meeting he co-hosted with Senator Bill Frist for Australian Prime Minister John Howard that touched on issues ranging from trade to military support, Senator Tom Daschle reiterated his concern about the Australian Free Trade Agreement and its impact on rural states like South Dakota.

“Australia is an important ally and trading partner. It has joined our military efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, so it is important to continue with those cooperative relations,” Senator Daschle said. “However, I told Prime Minister Howard directly about the negative impact that the Australian FTA could have on rural America --and, in particular, the agricultural sector of our economy. The ranchers in my state, already hurt by the discovery of Mad Cow disease in Canada, would be further hurt by the agreement the Bush Administration negotiated. It’s important that our trade policy not undermine our agricultural sector, and that’s why I will oppose the Australian FTA.”

In spite of concerns from cattle producers, dairy farmers, and other organizations, the Bush Administration fashioned an agreement that poses a significant threat to beef and cattle producers by providing Australia additional access to American beef markets. Under the terms negotiated by the Bush Administration, the agreement would establish an 18-year phase-in of increased Australian access to American markets.

In the meeting, which also included Senator Carl Levin of Michigan, Daschle thanked the prime minister for supporting the U.S. efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“I thanked the Prime Minister for his help in Iraq and Afghanistan,” Daschle said. “As I have said before, we need more international support to supplement the work of American troops in Iraq and elsewhere. I urged the Prime Minister to continue this partnership.”

###