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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**July 18, 2016**

## **Vice President Biden talks up TPP in Australia as Congress Republicans say it will not pass this year**

“US Vice-President Joe Biden may talk up the TPP in his speech at Sydney University today. But US Senate Republican Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who controls the numbers in the U.S. Senate, declared last week in the [Washington Post](#) that the TPP legislation is unlikely to pass Congress this year. He said that the new President should reject or re-negotiate the deal 2017,” Dr Patricia Ranald, Convener of the Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network said today

Dr Ranald said opposition from presidential candidates Trump and Clinton had made it virtually impossible to pass the Trans-Pacific Partnership in the “lame duck” session of current Congress members after the November elections. Most Congressional Democrats are opposed, [Hillary Clinton](#) has strengthened her opposition, and it will not pass without Republican support. Republican Senate Finance Committee Chair [Orrin Hatch](#) last week launched another torpedo by accusing Australia of “stealing” from US Pharmaceutical companies. He called for even stronger monopoly rights for life-saving but costly biologic medicines, which would further delay more affordable versions of those medicines.

Dr Ranald said that Australian Trade Minister Ciobo’s visit to Washington last week to shore up the TPP showed desperation in the face of Australian election results which elected a record number of minor party and independent candidates opposed to the TPP.

“The TPP is so unpopular in the US that Australian Ministers are being recruited to lobby for it there, while US officials are talking it up here, urging the Australian Parliament to pass it before the US does,” said Dr Ranald

“But this game of double dare will not work The terms of the TPP require the US as the largest economy to pass the TPP implementing legislation, or the deal will collapse. Smaller countries like Australia would be very unwise to proceed with their implementing legislation before the US has passed its own legislation. This would put the Australian government in a weak and embarrassing position if an incoming US government rejected or sought to re-negotiate the terms of the agreement,” said Dr Ranald.

The Australian Joint Standing Committee on Treaties, which is dominated by the government, will resume its inquiry when Parliament sits, but the government has [refused to commission any independent studies](#) of the economic, health, environment or other impacts of the TPP for this Inquiry.

“We are calling for the ALP, Greens and other minor parties which form a majority in the Senate to conduct a Senate inquiry, which can commission independent studies into the TPP’s impact on future government regulation It could investigate major concerns about foreign investor rights to sue governments, stronger medicine monopolies and limits on local content in government purchasing rules in the TPP,” said Dr Ranald

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