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MEDIA RELEASE

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Sixty diverse community groups call for Senate inquiry into the TPP

Sixty diverse community organisations representing more than two million Australians have endorsed a letter to parliamentarians asking for a Senate Inquiry before Parliament votes on the TPP implementing legislation. (See letter below).

The groups include both national and local organisations of public health groups, unions, environment groups, faith groups, women's and aid and development organisations.

AFTINET Convener Dr Patricia Ranald said that the election debate had exposed the fact that trade agreements like the TPP [did not deliver promised jobs and growth](#). The [Productivity Commission](#) has recently repeated its criticism that the TPP would entrench monopoly rights on medicines and copyright, and would allow foreign companies to sue governments over future health, environment and other public interest laws.

"The current Joint Committee Inquiry is dominated by the Government which has refused to conduct independent assessments of the TPP. The TPP requires US endorsement, but it is unlikely to be passed by the [U.S. Congress](#). It would be unwise for the Australian Parliament to rush through the legislation. We call on the newly-elected Senate to conduct the independent assessments which the government has failed to do," said Dr Ranald.

Dr Deborah Gleeson from the Public Health Association of Australia said that the cost of the deal to public health could be high.

"If monopoly rights on biologic medicines are extended, there could be future costs to the PBS of hundreds of millions of dollars per year. There must be an independent assessment of all public health impacts," said Dr Gleeson.

ACTU President Ged Kearney said Australia had negotiated the worst deal for local jobs of the 12 TPP signatories.

"Despite promises, the TPP has no effective enforceable labour rights and would expand the use of frequently exploited temporary migrant workers without first testing for available local workers," said Ms Kearney.

Greenpeace Program Director Dominique Rowe said the TPP would allow global corporations to sue future governments for taking action against climate change or other environmental laws.

"Corporations should not be able to bypass national courts and sue governments in unfair international tribunals because they have acted to protect the environment," said Ms. Rowe.

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To Members of Parliament as addressed

We the undersigned 60 community organisations, representing over two million Australians, are gravely concerned about the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal between 12 Pacific Rim countries including Australia, the U.S and Japan.

The TPP faces widespread community opposition because it:

- allows foreign corporations to sue governments over changes to domestic law in unfair [international tribunals](#) which have no independent judiciary, no precedents and no appeals. Cases against tobacco regulation can be excluded, but claimed 'safeguards' for other health, environment, labour rights and public interest regulation like food labelling are [ineffective](#) and will not prevent future cases.
- locks in [stronger monopoly rights](#) for pharmaceutical companies which will delay access to cheaper medicines, leading to future higher prices for costly biologic medicines. Australia's law on biologic medicines will not change immediately. But there is a commitment to deliver up to three years of additional monopoly by administrative means, which would cost the PBS [hundreds of millions of dollars a year](#) for each year of delay in availability of cheaper medicines.
- locks in strong enforceable [rights for copyright holders](#) (mostly global corporations), which could prevent future governments from protecting consumer rights.
- despite promises, contains only weak commitments to [environmental standards](#), only one of which is fully enforceable. It does not mention climate change. Global corporations could sue governments for taking action against climate change or other environmental measures.
- contains only [weak commitments to labour rights](#), many of which are not enforceable, and will not protect the rights of increased numbers of temporary migrant workers.
- removes labour market testing for temporary migrant workers from six TPP countries. This will expose more of these vulnerable workers to exploitation as demonstrated by the [China FTA](#) and shown by other [recent studies](#). This threatens the skills, wages and working conditions of Australian workers.
- Like other trade agreements, will not deliver on [promises of increased jobs](#). A recent [World Bank study](#) of the TPP found negligible economic benefits for Australia, partly because it already has free trade agreements with the US and Japan, and all but three of the other TPP countries.

Despite this, the Government has refused to [undertake independent assessment](#) of the TPP's economic costs and benefits, including costs and risks to government of ISDS and stronger medicine and copyright monopolies.

The Government-dominated Joint Standing Committee Inquiry on the TPP will resume after the election and report before the implementing legislation is introduced to Parliament. This legislation should not be rushed through without proper independent assessment.

The TPP cannot proceed without implementing legislation from the two largest economies, the U.S and Japan.

In the U.S, there is strong opposition to the TPP from [both sides of politics](#) and both presidential candidates, Donald Trump and Hilary Clinton, do not support it. Clinton has recently [strengthened her opposition](#), and the [U.S. Congress](#) will not even consider it until after the November presidential election.

In New Zealand, the Labour Party has confirmed it [will vote against](#) the TPP in the NZ Parliament.

In this context, it would be unwise for the Australian Parliament to rush consideration of the implementing legislation.

Here in Australia, Labor, Greens and other parties have a majority in the Senate and could conduct a Senate inquiry.

We are calling on you to support a Senate Inquiry into the TPP and to commit to vote against the TPP's implementing legislation when it comes before the Parliament.

We look forward to your reply.

Please don't hesitate to telephone with any queries on (02) 9699 3686 or 0419 695 841.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Patricia Ranald, Convenor, Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network

This letter is endorsed by the following 60 organisations

National Organisations

Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network
Australian Catholic Social Justice Council
Australian Conservation Foundation
Australian Council of Trade Unions
Public Health Association Australia
The Australia Institute
ActionAid Australia
Caritas Australia
Jubilee Australia Research Centre
Friends of the Earth Australia
Greenpeace
FOODwatch
GeneEthics
National Toxics Network
Catholic Religious Australia
Columban Centre for Peace Ecology and Justice
Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and PNG

Loreto Sisters Australia and South East Asia
Missionaries of the Sacred Heart Justice and Peace Centre
Pax Christi Australia
Presentation Sisters of Australia and PNG
Sisters of Charity
The Grail Global Justice Network
The Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education
Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA
Centre for Work and Future at the Australia Institute
Australian Education Union
Australian Manufacturing Workers Union
Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation
Australian Services Union
Community and Public Sector Union (PSU Group)
Community and Public Sector Union (SPSF Group)
Electrical Trades Union of Australia
Finance Sector Union
Maritime Union of Australia
National Union of Workers
National Tertiary Education Union
Textile Clothing and Footwear Union of Australia
United Voice
SEARCH Foundation

State and regional organisations

Asian Women at Work (NSW)
Older Women's Network NSW
Mothers Advancing Deliciously Good Eating (Victoria)
Catholics in Coalition for Justice and Peace (NSW)
Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes (NSW)
Presentation Congregation Queensland
Presentation Sisters Western Australia
Presentation Sisters Wagga
Climate Change Balmain-Rozelle
ClimActs (Victoria)
CLIMARTE (Victoria)
Locals into Victoria's Environment (LIVE)
Sutherland Shire Environment Centre (NSW)
Australian Services Union NSW
Communication Workers Union Victoria
NSW Nurses and Midwives Association
NSW Teachers' Federation
NSW Retired Teachers' Association
SA Unions
South Coast Labour Council (NSW)