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## **Parliament urged to monitor RCEP impact on aged care and carbon emissions, and insist on commitments to human rights and labour rights**

*October 19, 2021:* Following today's [announcement](#) from Madeleine King MP that Labor will support enabling legislation of the **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)**, advocates have called on the Government and Opposition to publicly commit to re-examine the RCEP in the next term of Parliament amid fears that the trade deal may impede regulation for quality aged care and reduction of carbon emissions.

Despite Government and Opposition assurances, advocates maintain that the RCEP agreement has implications for human rights, labour rights, environmental protections, and regulation of aged care. The RCEP agreement includes a two-year review, allowing the Government an opportunity to address these concerns through renegotiation.

**Dr. Patricia Ranald**, Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network (AFTINET) Convenor, said:

“Parliament must closely monitor the agreement’s impact on workers rights, on our environment, and on critical services like aged care.”

“Whichever party forms Government in the upcoming election should re-assess and re-negotiate the terms of its participation in a two-year review of the deal.”

“Despite warnings from civil society groups and even the Government-majority [JSCOT Report](#), the Minister for Trade has not sought to exempt aged care from the deregulatory rules of the agreement. This means that Royal Commission recommendations to improve staffing levels and quality of care in aged care may be restricted. This must be addressed at the two-year review.”

“Likewise, the next Government should seek to include labour rights and human rights protections at the two-year review, particularly in light of global concern on human rights and labour rights violations in RCEP countries such as Myanmar, China, and the Philippines”.

“Furthermore, the RCEP agreement does not exclude state government regulation of carbon emissions from power stations, meaning that State Governments may be restricted in how they reduce carbon pollution”.

“If Australia is serious about achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, and meeting commitments at the COP26 Climate Change Conference this month, then any future Government should exclude the state government regulation of carbon pollution at the RCEP two-year review,” said Dr Ranald

She said the RCEP should be renegotiated to include enforceable commitments to agreed international labour rights and environmental standards, including the Paris Climate Agreement and the COP26 Climate Change Conference, enforced through the state-to state dispute process which applies to other chapters in the agreement.

AFTINET’s full submission to Joint Standing Committee on Treaties (JSCOT) RCEP inquiry can be read [here](#), and a joint-letter to Parliamentarians detailing community concerns may be read [here](#).

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