



TPP MP KIT: CRUNCH TIME IN PARLIAMENT

Why visit your MP or Senator?

Your local Federal MP and Senators will soon be asked to vote on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) implementing legislation.

This is the legislation that paves the way for the deal to come into force. Both the lower house and the Senate need to pass the legislation. The Government does not have a majority in the Senate. If the Senate votes no, Australia won't be able to ratify the agreement.

One of the most powerful ways you can influence your local MP or Senator is through a face-to-face meeting in your electorate.

When to go?

With the TPP vote likely to happen in June, there's limited time to influence our decision-makers.

Now is the time to act.

It won't be easy, but the more pressure we put on our representatives – especially Labor, Greens and independents - the more likely they will be to vote no.

That's why we're asking you to plan to visit your MP and/or Senator as soon as possible.

We've developed this kit to guide you through the process, step-by-step.

You'll find attached a **Sample letter Talking points** for your meeting and a **Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP): Crunch time in Parliament**

1. Contact your MP or Senator

The first step is to send a request for a meeting, in writing, to your MP or Senator.

If you're not sure who your representatives are, just enter your postcode in the form at http://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Members

The names and contact information of your MP and Senators will show up. It is best to pick a Labor or independent Senator to visit, as they hold the majority in the Senate.

Use our sample letter and send it by email or post. It's a good idea to customise the letter by introducing yourself and making it clear that you live in the local area. If you're a supporter, it can't hurt to let them know.

2. Follow up

Wait a couple of days and then follow up with a phone call to the electorate office. Ask to speak to the diary manager, and ask politely if they have received the letter and whether they would like to RSVP.

If they agree to meet with you, great! Ask for an email confirming the time and location in writing.

3. Be polite, but insistent

Parliamentarians are busy people and it might take a little while to get your appointment confirmed. You might need to follow up again with another phone call if a week or so passes before you get an answer.

4. Prepare

Now that you've locked in a time it's time to prepare.

You'll find most of the information you need by reading through this kit and scanning [our website](#) for the latest updates.

Remember, you don't need to be an expert in trade – if your MP or Senator has questions and you don't know the answer, you can always promise to find out for them.

It's also a good idea to check if there's any information out there on your MP or Senator's position on the TPP. A quick search on Google and check of their social media accounts should be all you need – and it'll help you guide the conversation.

4. On the day

Before you leave for your meeting, make sure you print out our background briefing to give to your MP and a copy of the talking points for your own reference.

First impressions are important, so make sure you arrive on time, dress appropriately and always stay polite.

If your MP has questions and you're not sure of the answer, make a note of it and offer to look it up after the meeting and get back to them.

No matter what the response, make sure you thank him or her for their time and commit to deliver any extra information you have promised.

5. Follow up

After your meeting, don't forget to send a thank you email or letter.

Not only is it a good way to build and maintain the relationship, but it is also an opportunity to remind them of the issue.

Remember to include any extra information you have promised. Our trade experts are happy to help with answering tricky questions – just send us an email at campaign@aftinet.org.au and we'll be sure to get back to you.

6. Let us know!

We'd love to know how you went! Shoot us a quick email: campaign@aftinet.org.au

Sample letter

[name of your MP/Senator]

[Their title: ie, Member for (Electorate) or Senator for (State)]

[their address]

[date]

Dear *[your MP/Senator]*,

I am writing to request a meeting with you to discuss the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal.

Parliament will soon be asked to vote on the TPP's implementing legislation, which will pave the way for the deal to come into force.

However, there has been no independent assessment of the costs and benefits of the deal for the Australian people.

I am extremely concerned that by ratifying the TPP, we could be undermining our democracy and public health system for very little economic benefit.

In particular, I am concerned about:

- Rights for multinational corporations to sue our governments over future public interest legislation
- Extended monopoly rights for biologic medicines which will delay cheaper versions of medicines and cost our health system millions of dollars each year
- More rights for corporate copyright holders at the expense of consumers
- Weak and ineffective labour rights and environmental standards

I would appreciate the opportunity to further outline these concerns with you at a time convenient for you.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

[your name]

[our contact details]

Talking points

Background

- There is strong public opposition in all TPP countries because the deal gives greater rights to corporations at the expense of people and the environment
- This includes the US, where both Democrat and Republican presidential candidates are opposed, and Congress will not vote on it until after the November Presidential election
- There have been no independent studies of the impact of the TPP on Australians
- The Government's National Interest Assessment was done by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, which negotiated the agreement. This is not an independent assessment.

Rights for global corporations to sue governments

- The TPP contains special rights for multinational corporations to sue governments over new laws – called Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS)
- There have been increasing numbers of cases against health, environmental and other public interest laws
- Only cases against tobacco regulation can be clearly excluded in the TPP
- “Safeguards” for other health, environment and public interest laws are similar to those in other agreements and have not prevented corporations from bringing cases against governments
- Even if a government wins a case, just defending it can take years and cost tens of millions of dollars in legal fees. The Philip Morris tobacco case against Australia took over four years and cost \$50 million

More expensive medicines

- The TPP will allow pharmaceutical companies to have longer monopolies and delay access to cheaper versions of expensive biologics medicines, used to treat serious diseases like cancer
- This could cost our Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme millions of dollars for every year of delay
- Millions of people in developing countries will no longer have access to the cheaper generic medicines they need

Labour rights weak and not enforceable

- Governments commit only to enforcing their own labour laws. Recognised international standards are mentioned but are not enforceable
- Not all workers are protected and the products of child labour or slave labour are not banned

- The TPP allows increased numbers of temporary migrant workers, which will create more exploitation as seen in 7-Eleven stores and other industries, without testing if local workers are available

Environmental standards not enforceable

- International environmental agreements are mentioned, but only one is enforceable
- There is no mention of climate change
- The lack of enforceability contrasts with rights of international corporations to sue governments if they take future action to protect the environment or implement the outcomes of the Paris agreement on climate change

Parliamentary process

- The TPP was formally signed in February 2016 but there is still a chance to stop it from going ahead
- Parliament is expected to vote on the TPP's implementing legislation in coming months. This could still be blocked in the Senate by Labor, Greens and independent MPs who form the majority

Ask your MP or Senator to:

- Push for an independent study of the TPP including its impacts on workers, the environment and public health
- Vote no to the TPP legislation

Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP): Crunch time in Parliament

The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is a trade deal involving twelve countries including Australia and the US. There is strong opposition to the deal in all TPP countries, including Australia, because it gives greater rights to corporations at the expense of people and the environment.

Key concerns include:

Rights for global corporations to sue governments

The TPP includes rights for foreign investors to bypass local courts and sue governments for millions of dollars in international tribunals if they can argue that a change in domestic law or policy at national, state or local level will 'harm' their investment. This is known as Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS).

The tribunals consist of investment lawyers who can continue to be practicing lawyers representing corporations, with obvious conflicts of interest.

Australia's High Court Chief Justice and other legal experts have said that ISDS is not a fair legal system because it has no independent judges, no precedents and no appeals. Increasing numbers of cases against health, environment and even minimum wage laws show that ISDS can threaten democratic rights to regulate.

There are "safeguards" in the TPP for health, environment and public welfare laws, but they are weak and ineffective. The only clear exclusion of future cases is for tobacco regulation. The general safeguards will not prevent corporations from bringing cases against other health or environmental laws.

Stronger monopolies on medicines

The TPP's strong monopoly rights for pharmaceutical companies will result in millions of people in developing countries being denied access to life-saving medicines.

In Australia, pharmaceutical companies who own expensive biologics medicines (used for treating cancer and other serious diseases) are likely to gain an extra three years of monopoly rights. Although our law will not change immediately, the TPP requires a future review and "other measures" which would "deliver a comparable market outcome" to the additional three years.

Each year of delay in the availability of cheaper biologic medicines would cost the Australian government hundreds of millions of dollars, creating pressure for higher prices at the chemist

Labour rights weak and not enforceable

Through the TPP governments commit only to enforcing their own labour laws. Recognised international standards are mentioned, but are not enforceable.

Not all workers are protected and the products of child labour or slave labour are not banned.

The TPP also allows increased numbers of temporary migrant workers, without testing if local workers are available. This will create more exploitation as seen recently in 7-Eleven stores and other industries.

Environmental standards not enforceable

International environmental agreements are mentioned in the TPP, but only one is enforceable. There is no mention of climate change.

The lack of enforceability contrasts with rights of international corporations to sue governments if they take future action to protect the environment or implement the outcomes of the Paris agreement on climate change.

Parliamentary process

The TPP was formally signed in February 2016, but all TPP countries must pass its implementing legislation before it can come into force.

In Australia, Parliament will vote on the implementing legislation after an inquiry by the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties.

The Government has a majority on this committee and the National Interest Assessment it uses is done by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, which negotiated the agreement. This is not an independent assessment.

There will also be a Senate inquiry on which the government does not have a majority, which is likely to be more critical of the agreement.

A broad range of community organisations including environment groups, aid and development organisations, churches, unions and public health experts have united in calling for independent studies of the TPP before parliament votes on its implementing legislation.

In the absence of such studies, MPs and Senators should vote no to the TPP implementing legislation.

For more information on all of these issues and the latest TPP news, please visit www.aftinet.org.au