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## **Media Release**

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### ***Another deadline missed as Trans-Pacific Singapore talks end with US-Japan rift on market access***

“Ministers from the 12 Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) countries, including the US, Japan and Australia have missed yet another deadline because Japan and the US cannot agree about access to agricultural markets between themselves, and have not made comprehensive market access offers to other governments”, Dr Patricia Ranald, Convenor of the Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network, said today.

“The bland Ministerial statement says “great strides” have been made, but that differences remain and Ministers will need to consult domestically on outstanding issues and meet again in May,” said Dr Ranald.

“Behind this bland language is the fact that Japan is still insisting that agricultural products, including rice, beef, dairy, sugar and wheat be excluded from progressing to zero tariffs. [Media reports](#) say the US and Japan could not agree on market access. The US has also delayed making market access offers on its own agricultural products,” said Dr Ranald.

“This has huge implications for Australia, as the claimed economic benefits of the TPP for Australia rest almost entirely upon Australia having significantly increased access to both US and Japanese agricultural markets”, said Dr Ranald.

“Australian Trade Minister Robb has said he is ready to trade off foreign investor rights to sue governments over domestic legislation, in exchange for agricultural market access,” said Dr Ranald.

“Such tradeoffs are unacceptable in themselves, but it would be even more reckless for the Trade Minister to contemplate such tradeoffs in this context, when there is little prospect of increased market access to either Japanese or US agricultural markets,” said Dr Ranald.

“Nor can the US guarantee that any TPP deal will pass the US Congress. Senior US Democrat and Republican [Congress members](#) are stating even more strongly that they will not grant Fast Track authority to give up rights to amend the text of trade agreements. Without Fast Track, the Congress can unpick any deal reached in negotiations,” said Dr Ranald.

“Trade Minister Robb should refuse US demands for tradeoffs on foreign investor rights to sue governments. The TPP text should be released for public and Parliamentary discussion before it is signed,” said Dr Ranald.

For more on US-Japan rift see <http://the-japan-news.com/news/article/0001061260>