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TPP leak shows devil in the detail on access to biologic medicines and copyright monopolies

“The [final version](#) of the intellectual property chapter the TPP was leaked today on WikiLeaks with several technical analyses” said Dr Patricia Ranald, Coordinator of the Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network. “The deal was announced on October 6, but the text remained secret.”

“Further analysis will take more time, but the text reveals that the US proposal for an extension of monopolies on costly life-saving biologic medicines from 5 to 8 years is still in the text. Five years is a minimum standard but there is a clause which refers to ‘other measures’ for an additional three years of monopoly on biologics ‘to deliver a comparable market outcome’,” said Dr Ranald.

“Any extension of these monopolies would cost the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme hundreds of millions of dollars for every year of delay for cheaper versions of these medicines to become available and lead to pressure for higher prices at the chemist.”

“Trade Minister Andrew Robb has insisted that Australia has not agreed to immediate extension of biologic monopolies beyond the Australian standard of five years, and that will be no change to Australia’s existing medicines regime. We hope that is the case, but the text is ambiguous. What are the other measures to deliver a comparable market income and how do they apply in Australia?” said Dr Ranald.

“This compromise wording will be the subject of a huge battle in the [U.S. Congress](#), as pharmaceutical companies struggle to insist on interpretations of the agreement which will extend the monopoly to 8 years.

The leaked chapter also confirms some extension of copyright monopolies, which have been initially analysed by [copyright specialists](#). More detailed analysis of the impacts of this dense technical document and its impacts in Australia will be available soon.”

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