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MEDIA RELEASE

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Trade Minister Robb shoots the messenger, refuses independent TPP assessment

Trade Minister Robb today rejected calls from [59 community organisations](#) representing over two million Australians for an independent assessment by the Productivity Commission on ABC national radio this morning. He claimed that the broad alliance of public health, church, environment, aid and development and union organisations were just ‘the usual suspects opposed to all trade agreements’ “.

AFTINET Convener Dr Patricia Ranald said that Mr. Robb was shooting the messenger, and failing to address genuine community concerns, also expressed by bodies like the [Australian Competition and Consumer Commission](#) and the [Productivity Commission](#).

“The TPP locks in stronger monopoly rights for global corporations over medicines and copyright, and gives all foreign investors special additional rights to sue governments over domestic laws. This is the opposite of free trade,” said Dr Ranald.

“We are not opposed to trade. We are making the point that the TPP is not mainly about trade at all. Australia already has free trade agreements with nine of the 12 TPP countries, and a [World Bank study](#) shows there will be minuscule trade gains after 15 years.”

“Mr Robb’s claim that independent assessments are not needed because the government is tabling a National Interest Assessment in Parliament fails to mention that this document is produced by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, which negotiated the agreement. This is not an independent assessment.”

Dr Ranald said that the TPP will be reviewed by the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties over the next few months before Parliament votes on the implementing legislation. Community organisations will make submissions and appear at public hearings. But the government has a majority on this committee and it cannot change the agreement. That is why genuinely independent assessments are needed.”

“We repeat our call to parliamentarians to support independent economic, health and environmental assessments of the TPP before any vote on the implementing legislation. In the absence of such assessments, we are calling on the majority in the Senate to reject the implementing legislation,” said Dr Ranald.

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