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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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## Divisions over US demands prevent final deal at TPP Singapore meeting: negotiations to continue next year

"Another missed deadline in the secretive Trans-Pacific Partnership talks shows that there are still divisions over US demands on investor rights to sue governments, higher prices for medicines and draconian copyright laws, all of which would increase corporate rights at the expense of consumers," Dr Patricia Ranald, Convenor of the Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network said today.

"Leaked documents have exposed these demands to the harsh light of public debate and there is growing community opposition to them."

Dr Ranald has just returned from Singapore where she was observing the talks.

"The short Ministerial statement (attached) only mentions "progress" with no details and that Ministers will meet again in January. The fact that no new deadline has been set for completing the deal means that the US heavy-handed pressure to meet deadlines which suit its political timetable is meeting some resistance," said Dr Ranald.

"This makes the reported Australian government cave-in to US demands for longer patents on medicines, which would raise medicine prices, appear even more reckless and unacceptable, "said Dr Ranald.(see earlier media release below).

Trade Minister Robb has fallen into the trap of making concessions in the vain hope of more market access for Australian agricultural products to US markets. But it is clear that the US is delaying making any market access offers precisely to extract such concessions."

"Moreover, the US Congress has not even agreed to Trade Promotion Authority for the TPP, which means the detail of the text can be amended by Congress. The same Congress which shut down the US government in October could unpick any deal," said Dr Ranald.

"The Government should respond to growing community resistance to such trade-offs and should agree to the release of the text of the TPP before it is signed," said Dr Ranald.

Contact Dr Patricia Ranald Sydney on 0419 695 841.

## Abbott Government caves in to US demands on stronger patents and higher prices for medicines in TPP talks

A report from the Singapore TPP talks today in the specialized US trade journal, *The Washington Trade Daily*, claims that Australia, New Zealand and Canada have agreed to drop their objections to US proposals on medicines in the Trans-Pacific Partnership talks due to finish in Singapore today," Dr Patricia Ranald, Convenor of the Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network said today.

"This would mean that the Australian Government has agreed to extreme US demands for longer and stronger patent laws which will delay the availability of cheaper generic medicines and mean higher prices for medicines," said Dr Ranald.

"This report makes a mockery of the assurances given by Trade Minister Robb that he would not agree to anything that would undermine the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

"The current patent term for medicines is already 20 years, but the US wants extensions of 5 years in some circumstances. The PBS controls the wholesale price for new medicines by comparing the medical effectiveness and price of new patented medicines with existing medicines, including cheaper generic medicines. Longer patents will mean higher costs for new medicines in the PBS, and higher prices for longer for other medicines, because of the delay in generic medicines coming onto the market. This will mean higher costs for government, which will be passed on to consumers," explained Dr Ranald.

"Agreement to another US demand to extend data exclusivity for biologic medicines from 5 to 12 years would delay cheaper generic medicines even further by delaying the access to clinical data which generic companies need before they can commercialise cheaper versions of drugs", said Dr Ranald.

"This revelation shows that the Minister's assurances mean nothing when negotiations take place in secret and we don't know the result until after the deal is done. We call for the release of the text of the TPP for full public and parliamentary discussion before it is signed," said Dr Ranald.

Contact Dr Patricia Ranald Sydney on 0419 695 841.