

Gear up for a hard 2013 campaign ...

We hope everyone had a well-earned break and is refreshed, energised and ready to build on the great efforts for the December round so we can defeat the TPPA in 2013. They are serious about a October 2013 deadline for making the political trade-offs so we need to become even more effective in mobilising local communities, unions, iwi, Grey Power, local governments, bloggers, letter writers, mainstream media, as well as the politicians ...

Timeline to October 2013

Political pressure is building to reach a political deal when TPP leaders meet for APEC in October, in or near Indonesia. We understand that four rounds are scheduled before then, the last two conveniently located where the US can wield its greatest influence:

4-13 March in Singapore

May in Peru

Vancouver in the US

September in US

The NZ Cabinet is likely to make decisions **before or immediately after the May round**, and some decisions before then. So we have very little time to make Cabinet, National MPs and the Labour caucus unwilling to take the political risks.

Pending NZ trade-offs on meds

Tim Groser confessed in December that his government was prepared to be 'flexible' on two issues - even before the political horse-trading begins. One trade-off involves Pharmac. It will either give way to the US demands on patents or so-called transparency. We understand that their position has not yet been tabled in the talks. It is **really important** that the public health groups, and anyone concerned about Pharmac and the right to control our own medicines regime, intensify the pressure on the government and on local MPs to demand assurances **now** that they will not cave in to Big Pharma's demands on medicines.

Strategy meeting in Wellington, 3.30-5pm 13 January

There was a lot of great action in Wellington last year, especially before and during the December round. We are planning to hold a strategy meeting for Wellington groups from 3.30pm to 5.30pm on 13 January at the PPTA offices, level 5, 60 Willis St. We will do a brief stocktake on what we achieved in 2012, strategies for intensifying the campaign in 2013, and what groups and individuals can contribute. A similar Auckland meeting will follow.

US did not discuss dairy access to US in Auckland round

We still hear the only real gain for NZ from the TPPA will be more access for dairy exports to the US. In December NZ [Federated Farmers](#) and their Australian counterpart called for the elimination of all agricultural and food product tariffs and reform of non-tariff measures. The Fed Farmers president wrote an [impassioned op ed](#) in the Herald. But the [US chief negotiator told US NGOs on 10 January](#) that (paraphrased): "We've had just preliminary discussions with NZ to understand their industry, etc. We haven't had internal discussions about this yet – dairy is in the sensitive basket for us and we are not in a rush." She also hinted that the US thinks its dairy farmers might be convinced to agree to some minimal access for NZ if they can sell more products to Canada. So it is a giant chess game where the winners, if any, will be the agri-food industry and the cost will be 'collateral damage' to our domestic control over medicines, mining, internet, GE, tobacco, and so much more.

Bit Tobacco threatens investment case against NZ on plain packaging

Submissions on the proposed plain packaging tobacco law have closed. [British American Tobacco NZ](#) has made threats about suing the government in the notoriously shonky investment tribunals – it doesn't say under which agreement, probably because it knows the arguments are quite weak under NZ's existing trade and investment treaties. The TPPA would be a game changer, especially if it was concluded before the plain packaging legislation got through Parliament.

Canada is conducting an environmental impact assessment of TPPA

Friends at the Council of Canadians report that a [Canada Gazette Notice](#) was quietly posted to the Government of Canada website on December 1. According to the [government's framework](#) for conducting these things, if an initial EA does not find significant environmental impacts from a trade agreement, they skip the production of a draft report and head straight to a final report. They did this for the Canada-China investment treaty, which they claimed would not increase investment into Canada and therefore cannot be argued to have any environmental impacts. This led to a fairly major backlash against the EA process and demands from First Nations and environmental groups to do the whole thing over again before ratifying the [investment treaty]. 'If Canada can do it, why can't we????'

US Trade Negotiator's briefing to NGOs tells them something

After each negotiating round the lead US trade official gives an NGO briefing. It is not much, but is more than we get told. That's how we found out about the dairy issue (above). A [Knowledge Ecology](#) International summarises the discussion on secrecy and copyright.

US mining company pursues the investment dispute on Quebec's anti-fracking law

The Pike River report revealed the fatal flaws in NZ's mining regulation. The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment has called for stricter regulation of fracking, short of a moratorium. Even that could be at risk under a TPPA. US company Lone Pine has given a formally [notification](#) to Canada that it intends suing it under NAFTA "for the arbitrary, capricious, and illegal revocation of the Enterprises's valuable right to mine for oil and gas under the St. Lawrence River by the Government of Quebec without due process, without compensation, and with no cognizable public purpose."

Upcoming events

[No to Asset Sales](#) rally, Frank Kitts Park, Wellington, 6-9pm 13 February - bring TPPA placards and banners. Jane Kelsey will speak. (Also a 1 pm rally to support [Feed the Kids](#) Bill)

Media and Resources

[Rod Oram's](#) article on economic challenges for 2013 includes sceptical comments on TPP
[Susan Chalmers](#) from InternetNZ on Music101 talking on copyright and the arts
Article in [Sydney Morning Herald](#) against copyright criminal penalties and the TPP
Australian article on [rural public health](#) and TPPA
Australian groups [submission](#) on IP Australia Review of Pharmaceutical Patents
Pro-TPPA report from [Peterson Institute](#), USA and [critique](#) by Ben Beachy from Public Citizen.

Please share TPPA activities or good articles:

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