

# The TPPA – an overview

Our government is negotiating an international agreement that could have a huge effect on the lives of ordinary kiwis. It's called the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA), and it involves eleven Asian and Pacific-rim countries, including the United States. If it goes ahead, we risk damage to our innovative economy, our pristine environment, our health, and the ability to shape our own future.

**B**ecause the negotiations are being conducted in secret, what we know about the TPPA comes from leaked documents and detective work. This is not acceptable. We live in a democracy, which means we have the right to know what is done in our name and to have a say.

So what's troubling about the TPPA? From what we know so far, if the negotiations are completed it will become much harder for the New Zealand government to look after our environment, promote health, protect workers and consumers, and promote the public interest:

- Most restrictions on **foreign investment will be frozen** and rolled back even further.
- Big **overseas companies will be able to sue the New Zealand government for millions in damages** in secretive offshore tribunals, claiming that new laws and regulations (for example, a ban on fracking, smoking control laws, or a cap on electricity prices) have seriously undermined the value of their investments.
- **Medicines will become more expensive** as big pharmaceutical companies gain more influence over PHARMAC, and restrictions are placed on generic medicines.
- Copyright laws will be toughened and more harshly enforced, **restricting internet freedom and access to information**, costing libraries, schools, and businesses, and stifling innovation.
- **Parallel importing will be banned**, meaning that New Zealanders, especially the poor, will have to pay far more for all sorts of ordinary products.
- Foreign banks, insurance companies and money traders will gain **more powers to challenge laws designed to prevent another financial crisis**; and overseas property dealers could contest moves to burst the property bubble, such as a capital gains tax.

There are plenty of other things to be concerned about, and you can read about them [here](http://www.itsourfuture.org.nz/resources/) (<http://www.itsourfuture.org.nz/resources/>).

The government tries to dismiss the critics of TPPA as anti-trade and opposed all foreign investment. Neither of these statements is true, and they are disrespectful to the diverse communities across Aotearoa who fear the TPPA is being negotiated solely for big corporations, and not in the interests of ordinary kiwis.

Our government says it is acting in New Zealand's best interest. If they really believe that, they should bring the negotiations into the open, and provide evidence of concrete benefits to outweigh these serious costs. That is what democracy requires.

“Does the TPPA sound like something New Zealand should be a part of?”



**Links:**

1. [www.itsourfuture.org.nz/take-action/](http://www.itsourfuture.org.nz/take-action/)
2. [www.avaaz.org/en/stop\\_the\\_corporate\\_death\\_star/](http://www.avaaz.org/en/stop_the_corporate_death_star/)
3. [www.itsourfuture.org.nz/news/](http://www.itsourfuture.org.nz/news/)

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