

Bulletin #89

It's Our Future – Kiwis against the TPPA

21 July 2016



Check out the re-vamped It's Our Future website at www.itsourfuture.org.nz.

The TPPA's in Trouble

The future of the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) is in doubt. There is [growing opposition](#) to passing the TPPA in the 'lame duck' session of Congress after the Presidential election, but before the new President takes office. The Democrats are critical of the TPPA. In support of Bernie Sanders strong rejection, Senator Elizabeth Warren released a powerful [video](#). The Democrats had a major debate on their policy platform for the Presidential election, but that did not include rejection of the TPP. Some commentators have therefore expressed doubts that Hillary Clinton would reject the TPPA if elected President because of her [corporate ties and her worldview](#). But others argue that political support for trade deals like the TPPA has been eroded and Clinton's opposition during the Democrat primaries would make it impossible for her to [pass the TPPA](#). Vice-President Joe Biden got a [strong message](#) from It's Our Future campaigners when he arrived at Auckland airport: Don't leave the TPPA as a toxic legacy.

The results of the Australian election cast doubt on whether the TPPA can be ratified, according to campaign network [AFTINET](#). And in the parallel Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), between the US and EU, the Brexit vote could derail negotiations that were already in trouble, according to [campaigners](#).

Campaign Plans in Aotearoa

Connect the Dots: Citizens taking back democracy: A major Day of Action in towns and cities across Aotearoa is planned for 10th September. Mobilisation plans are on the new It's Our Future [website](#) and on our Facebook [page](#).

The Day of Action aims to connect up a wide range of groups who are opposing corporate control and working for a better future, linking issues across the TPPA, climate campaigns, anti-privatisation campaigners, local food and organics networks, trade unions, housing and poverty campaigns, peace

activists and defenders of rights under te Tiriti. We need to build the movement that is about [creating hope for the future](#).

The Days of Action will be coordinated by local coalitions across the country. Most will include music, speeches, stalls and displays, as well as marches, and hopefully we will get participation from leading international campaigners in person or by video link.

Put it in your diary. Check out the outline on [Its Our Future Facebook page](#), and contact your local group listed on the [IOF website](#).

Local government and the TPPA – Councils that represent 60% of the New Zealand population have passed resolutions against the TPPA. Now we need them to declare TPPA Free Zones to make it clear they reject the TPPA. It's Our Future will set up a website to record the positions of candidates for local boards, Councils and DHBs across Aotearoa on the TPPA.

TPPA Campaign News

The minority reports (disagreeing with the government's support of the TPPA) were written by Labour, Greens and NZ First, and included as separate sections in the Parliamentary Select [Committee report](#). The Maori Party has also taken a strong position against the TPPA. [Here](#) is their submission to the Parliamentary Select Committee.

Pressure is being mounted on the Labour Party to translate their opposition to the TPPA into a commitment to ditch the treaty if they are elected at the next election - [Jane Kelsey blog](#). A protest was mounted at the Labour Party's centenary celebrations, calling for them to clearly reject the TPPA if elected into government.

Meanwhile the legislative amendments required for Parliamentary ratification of the TPPA are going through the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Select Committee. [Submissions are due](#) on 22 July 2016. The submission by Dr. Jane Kelsey is [here](#).

Attack of the clones

Whatever is happening to the TPPA in other countries, we need to stop it here. But we also need to stop its clones – the RCEP, TiSA, NZ-EU FTA and the PACER Plus.

RCEP

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the China-led trade and investment treaty under negotiation, came to New Zealand earlier this month. There were two public events, in Wellington and Auckland, including former high level UN official Dr. Jomo Kwame Sundaram. The video link to the Wellington event is [here](#) (starts at 30min:35sec).

Like the TPPA, RCEP has an Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) mechanism that would allow foreign investors to sue governments. India is resisting calls for opening up their economy and proposing a more limited scope for ISDS.

Herald Business Editor, Fran O'Sullivan criticises the government over a trade agreement http://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=11657170

MSF Doctors Without Borders is concerned that pressure to cut-and-paste into RCEP provisions similar to the TPPA will dramatically [undermine global availability of generic medicines](#) from countries such as India.

Next RCEP meetings are in Vientiane, Lao PDR on 5 August and Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam on 15-19 August 2016.

TISA

The Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA) would be a huge extension to the World Trade Organisation agreement on services. There are serious threats to renewable energy, water services, health care and affordability of public services. Like other negotiations, the text has been kept secret, but there are leaked drafts on Wikileaks <https://wikileaks.org/tisa/> and commentary [here](#).

NZ-EU FTA

The NZ government is pushing hard for a NZ-EU Free Trade Agreement, despite Brexit <http://www.msn.com/en-nz/news/national/nz-on-track-for-eu-free-trade-deal-mcclay/ar-BBu9Jc2?li=AA59FU&ocid=spartandhp>. The EU would insist on opening up the negotiations for more consultations, and would include some (inadequate) improvements to investor-state dispute settlement but EU's proposals for the core provisions of the agreement are likely to be similar to the TPPA.

PACER Plus

PACER Plus is a proposed trade and investment agreement between Australia & New Zealand and 14 Pacific Island nations. A recent [Social Impact Assessment](#) shows that there are serious impacts and threats for the Pacific from PACER Plus. The campaign against PACER Plus is being coordinated by the Pacific Network on Globalisation (PANG) <http://pang.org.fj/>

Media

There have been threats from Imperial Tobacco that they will take the New Zealand government to court if the legislation for plain packaging goes ahead. However, they are unlikely to succeed. Recently, [Phillip Morris lost their case](#) in the World Trade Organisation against the government of Uruguay over laws on tobacco marketing. Phillip Morris also lost an earlier attempt to take the Australian government to an international tribunal. Australia won but wasted \$58 million defending themselves.

TPPA bad for health inequalities <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PO1606/S00342/trade-deal-will-increase-health-inequities.htm>

The TPPA and draft Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership between the US and EU would undermine action on climate change <http://content.sierraclub.org/press-releases/2016/07/leaked-document-reveals-alarming-new-environmental-threats-transatlantic>

The Institute for Agricultural Trade Policy (IATP) warns of the threat to food standards http://www.iatp.org/files/SellingOffTheFarm_full_f_0.pdf

Warnings of the threats to corporate control over seeds under the TPPA: <http://www.thenation.com/article/the-trans-pacific-partnership-will-hurt-farmers-and-make-seed-companies-richer/>

Gus van Haarten, a recent visitor to New Zealand and professor of law at New York's Osgoode Hall, in a [damning report](#) talks about the \$multi-billion corporations who take most of the ISDS cases, exploding the government's line that ISDS will help New Zealand SMEs. In fact, they are the ones

most likely to lose out as any preferences for small companies or local businesses are challenged by multinationals.

The US government is trying to change the TPPA final agreement after its multinationals complained that countries should not be allowed to hold financial data locally. Why might you want to keep your data locally? <http://www.michaelgeist.ca/2016/01/the-trouble-with-the-tpp-day-12-restrictions-on-data-localization-requirements/>

Do we provide too much protection to the holders of IP? <http://www.truth-out.org/opinion/item/36489-the-secret-to-the-incredible-wealth-of-bill-gates>

Strong criticism by influential commentator in the US: [Bill Moyers: Trans-Pacific trade pact is death for democracy](#)

George Monbiot on Brexit in the UK Guardian:

“If it is true that Britain will have to renegotiate its trade treaties, is this not the best chance we’ve had in decades to contain corporate power – of insisting that companies that operate here must offer proper contracts, share their profits, cut their emissions and pay their taxes? Is it not a chance to regain control of the public services slipping from our grasp? ... In this chaos we can, if we are quick and clever, find a chance to strike a new contract: proportional representation, real devolution and a radical reform of campaign finance to ensure that millionaires can never again own our politics.”

Funding the campaign

We have launched a Give a Little page to fund the speaker tour that was held in February and to build up a fund for a big event later in the year. Please [donate generously](#).

The Campaign is gearing up ...

There are opportunities ahead of us to build on the global movement against the TPPA and other pro-corporate agreements. Please put 10 September Day of Action into your diary and join with others to make sure it is a strong statement of our opposition to agreements like the TPPA, but also our determination to build a better Aotearoa.

We then have campaign actions coming up for the local election (in the next Bulletin) and a huge mobilisation planned for Wellington on 29th October.

We can win this campaign. Even though we can’t stop the TPPA being ratified in Parliament, it won’t come into force until 2018. We have more than half of NZ citizens against the TPPA and opposition from the major political parties – Labour, Greens, NZ First and the Maori Party. We can ensure that a future New Zealand government rejects the TPPA at the next election.

Kia kaha

Barry Coates

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