

# The Great TPPA Education Drive - Adopt an MP!

The Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) is a far-reaching international economic agreement involving 12 countries, including New Zealand and the USA. Its rules would tie the hands of future governments in areas ranging from medicines and mining to food safety, foreign investment and access to the Internet. It would be enforceable by foreign states and foreign investors in private offshore tribunals. Despite these impacts on our future, the TPPA is being negotiated in secret. As a result of this secrecy the level of **understanding** of the TPPA and its implications is very low amongst our MPs. **That's why we're asking you to play the teacher to give your local MPs a sense of what's at stake.** This will run for a month, starting from 11 May 2013. What would you have to do?

**STEP ONE:** Adopt an MP of your choice to visit and talk to. You can do this by signing up for that MP on the [itsourfuture.org.nz](http://itsourfuture.org.nz) website. We'll send you an info pack with the necessary contact details and resources to get the ball rolling. We will have a maximum of four people choosing each MP. *The campaign will begin on the international day of action, Saturday 11 May.*

**STEP TWO:** Familiarise yourself with the resources we send you and the issues most relevant to you and your MP of choice. You don't need to be an expert – remember, there is very little info in the public domain. But do think about what is most important to your electorate, to that MP (especially if they are a Minister or have a shadow portfolio), and to that party as a whole.

**STEP THREE:** Pop in for a chat, school them up on those issues, and get a sense for where they sit on the issues. Use the questions on the other side of this page as an initial guide – you don't have to ask them all (as you might not have that much time), but see how much information you can get out of them. Take some notes on what they say and where they're coming from, then leave them with the resources we've provided so they can do some research for themselves. Tell them you will come back in a month to follow up on what you discussed.

**STEP FOUR:** Report your findings back to [itsourfuture.org.nz](http://itsourfuture.org.nz) by sending an email to [itsourfuture@gmail.com](mailto:itsourfuture@gmail.com). This will not be made public, but provides



*Why should we cede yet more control over our economy – allowing foreign corporations to enforce rights against our government that are not available to our own firms – in pursuit of much greater access to the American market for our dairy products that the US dairy industry will never allow?"*

– Bryan Gould

*Economic commentator, former Vice-Chancellor & MP*

*A TPPA could give transnational companies the right to sue future governments if they legislated to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or restrict the use of Genetic Engineering technology. It would give away the freedom of our children and grandchildren to determine their own future. Please help us stop it.*

– Jeanette Fitzsimmons, former Green Party Co-leader.

*The TPP is of grave concern to me, as it appears to give multinational corporations the right to override national laws, and sue governments when they don't get their way.*

– Don McGlashan, NZ Writer Director representative on the APRA board.

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**STEP FIVE:** Make an appointment to follow up with your adopted MP in one month's time. You can revisit the questions they didn't know the answers to, or, if you've got more of a sense on where your MP sits, get a bit creative! Take along new information in areas they showed an interest in or to show them the problems. Tell us what you need (by email to [itsourfuturenz@gmail.com](mailto:itsourfuturenz@gmail.com) and we will do our best to provide it. Again, take some notes to see if they've changed their views at all and encourage them to take a stand within their party and publicly on issues they are passionate about that will be affected by the TPPA.

**STEP SIX:** Report your new findings back to your future by sending an email to [itsourfuture@gmail.com](mailto:itsourfuture@gmail.com). Include as much detail as you can.

Once you've reported back, we'll collate all responses on the website so people can get an idea of how much their candidates and parties know about the issues, where they sit on those issues, and what can be done. Of course, we will check with you before we finalise this. If we have several people who have adopted the same MP we will pull the various reports together. The relevant information sheets are noted in brackets.

### QUESTIONS FOR MPS

**1** What do you know about the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement? [See Info Sheet 1: An overview of what the TPPA will mean for NZ]

**2** Do you know that these negotiations are secret and that we will not get to see the agreement until well after it is signed? Parliament has no effective veto over the TPPA process, even though its hands will be tied by the rules that are created in that negotiation. [See Info Sheet 1: An overview of what the TPPA will mean for NZ]

**3** Do you know what their party's policy/perspective on TPPA is? Do you know the other parties' policies? [See Party Policy sheet]

**4** Do you know that under TPPA's "investor-state dispute settlement" (ISDS) provisions foreign investors would have the right to sue New Zealand in private offshore courts to challenge changes to NZ laws and policies? Do you know that Australia has opposed the inclusion of these same provisions? [See Info Sheet 7: Investor-State Dispute Settlement under the TPPA]



*"A free trade agreement with the US (via the TPPA) aims to remove any remaining 'restrictions' on foreign investment by US transnational corporations under NZ's (token) oversight regime. Big Tobacco is already threatening New Zealand under existing agreements. If the TPPA comes into being, the privileged position of transnational corporations will become embedded in New Zealand's law."*

– Murray Horton, Secretary/Organiser, CAFCA.

*My immediate concern about the TPP is that it might limit internet access. I am also concerned about the threat to New Zealand's sovereignty – our environment, labour legislation and public health should not be reduced to bargaining chips in secret negotiations. Finally, as part of the aging demographic I am worried about PHARMAC and the possibility of it being scaled-back under pressure from the United States' "Big Pharma" lobby.*

– Mary Ellen O'Connor, writer.

*NZ governments fall over themselves to sign free trade agreements where foreign multi-billion dollar corporates come first and indigenous peoples and the Treaty of Waitangi come last. We all remember the savage impact of trade liberalization on workers, particularly Maori in manufacturing jobs; now a TPPA threatens open season on assets, plunder of intellectual and cultural heritage, and health care only the rich can afford. Is this the Aotearoa we want?*

– Hone Harawira, Mana Party Leader.

Subject: The Great TPPA Education Drive - Adopt an MP!  
Date: 23.04.2013  
More at: [www.itsourfuture.org.nz](http://www.itsourfuture.org.nz)

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**5** Are you aware that major pharmaceutical companies want to use the TPPA negotiation process to undermine Pharmac's low cost pharmaceutical buying system in the name of transparency? Will you go in to fight to ensure there are no changes to Pharmac? [See Info Sheet 3: The TPPA and access to medicines]

**6** Are you aware that many NZ IT companies, Consumer NZ, the library association, the Foundation of the Blind, TradeME, Telecom Users Association, and others have organised a FairDeal Coalition to oppose the changes to NZ copyright laws the US is demanding? [See the Fair Deal campaign]

**7** Did you know that even after years of negotiation that the US has refused to discuss agricultural market access (which is supposedly the main drawcard for NZ)? Did you know that the US refused to give Australia access to the US market for sugar and only minimal, long term access for dairy in the Australia-US Free Trade Agreement?

**8** Are there any issues that you are concerned about as an MP that you would like information on? [Direct all requests for more information to [itsourfuturenz@gmail.com](mailto:itsourfuturenz@gmail.com)]

**9** Would you support a hearing on implications before the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee to help inform negotiators' positions?

**10** Will you promote a discussion in your party caucus and invite submitters from external experts?

**11** Are you prepared to meet with a group of your constituents who have concerns about these issues?

Other questions: Would you like to ask other questions on specific issues, but are not sure how to frame it or if you're on the right track? Know your MP has a particular focus but are not sure how TPPA will affect that area? Shoot an email through to [itsourfuturenz@gmail.com](mailto:itsourfuturenz@gmail.com) and we'll give you a helping hand!!!

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



<sup>1</sup> <http://www.itsourfuture.org.nz/take-action/>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.avaaz.org/en/stop\\_the\\_corporate\\_death\\_star/](http://www.avaaz.org/en/stop_the_corporate_death_star/)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.itsourfuture.org.nz/news/>