

Submission 10 – Mrs M Lovejoy

19 Feb 2016

Committee Secretary

Joint Standing Committee on Treaties

Parliament House, Canberra

I am an ordinary Australian citizen, with three children. I am not a member of any political party. I have no shares or vested interests. But I am concerned about the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP).

The TPP will have almost no economic benefits for Australia, because we already have free trade agreements with all but three of the Pacific Rim TPP countries. A World Bank study has estimated that it will result in a tiny 0.7% growth in the Australian economy after 15 years. The risks are just not worth this tiny potential benefit.

The TPP is not mainly about trade, but about restricting future governments from regulating in the public interest. The TPP allows the US to “set the rules for the region.” But what benefits US corporate interests is not necessarily in the interests of most Australians. In fact, it's often AGAINST the interests of ordinary citizens. I expect to be governed by those people elected by Australian voters, not corporations whose sole motivation is increased profit.

The Productivity Commission and the ACCC have said that the TPP gives foreign investors special rights to sue governments over domestic laws, and also strengthens monopoly rights on medicines and copyright at the expense of consumers. As a long term sufferer of a chronic illness, I'm especially concerned about price effects on our excellent PBS and potential huge rises in the cost of drugs. I DO NOT support an American-style health system, where illness can bankrupt the ordinary citizen.

The TPP allows foreign corporations to bypass domestic courts and sue governments over changes to domestic law in unfair international tribunals which have no independent judiciary, no precedents and no appeals. Cases against tobacco regulation can be excluded, but ‘safeguards’ for other health, environment, labour rights and public interest regulation are weak and will not prevent future cases. We must not hand over our sovereign rights in this way.

The TPP locks in stronger monopoly rights for pharmaceutical companies which will lead to higher prices for medicines. Australia's law on costly biologic medicines will not change immediately. But there is a commitment to deliver up to 3 years of additional monopoly for biologic medicines, which could cost the PBS hundreds of millions of dollars a year for each year of delay in availability of cheaper medicines.

Copyright experts argue that the TPP locks in copyright monopolies for global media and IT companies which could restrict future governments from responding to consumer rights and changing technologies.

The TPP contains only weak labour rights and environmental standards which are not enforceable, and will not protect the rights of increased numbers of temporary migrant workers.

The TPP removes labour market testing for temporary migrant workers. This will expose more of these workers to exploitation as seen in 7-Eleven stores and other industries without testing if local workers are available.

The TPP is certainly not in the public interest, and I urge you not to support the implementing legislation.

Yours sincerely

Mrs M Lovejoy

South Australia

One voice speaking truth is a greater force than fleets and armies.
- URSULA K. LE GUIN

What we achieve inwardly will change outer reality.
- Plutarch, via JK Rowling.