



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION **MEDIA RELEASE**

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New report shows the TPP is bad for our health

The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) has welcomed the release today of a report, *Negotiating Healthy Trade in Australia*, which examines potential impacts of the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) on our health sector.

Assistant General Secretary of the NSWNMA, Judith Kiejda, said the report canvassed many areas of health which could be severely impeded by the TPP – a new free trade agreement currently being developed between 12 negotiating parties across the Asia-Pacific region.

“This detailed report confirms the concerns that we and many other organisations hold, regarding adverse impacts the TPP will very likely have on Australia’s healthcare standards,” said Ms Kiejda.

“Increases in the cost of medicines – not only for individuals but also our hospitals – will make disease prevention measures even more difficult, such as stemming the negative impacts of nicotine and alcohol. It is also likely to make it harder for people to choose healthier options when buying foods.

“Based on the limited details of what is being negotiated in the TPP, it doesn’t appear to bode very well for our health and the NSWNMA has been trying to raise awareness of these issues for some time.

“One of our key concerns is why the Federal Government says it must reduce the future costs of maintaining Medicare, while on the other hand it is contemplating trade deals that have the potential to make healthcare more expensive and make Australians more unwell, as they try to avoid increased health costs.”

Ms Kiejda said the NSWNMA rejected recent public comments by Trade Minister Andrew Robb, after he claimed critics of the TPP were simply agitating on the issue in an attempt to frighten people.

“We are not anti-trade. We are pro-trade, especially if it has the capacity to improve people’s living standards. However, it’s alarming that the Trade Minister has inferred he won’t give up on something unless our country gets something in return,” said Ms Kiejda.

“What is it that Mr Robb thinks is worth trading our health away for? We should never enter into a position where Australia trades away public healthcare to the profit margins of multinationals.

“Mr Robb asks us to trust him, yet his own government is hell-bent on dismantling Medicare through co-payments and rebate freezes – how is that in our healthcare interests?”

The NSWNMA repeated its call to the Federal Government to release the trade agreement text and allow a fully informed debate on the matter or to withdraw Australia from the TPP negotiations.

The NSWNMA will join with other organisations in protesting against the TPP on 13 March, in the lead up to the next round of negotiations.



“The public’s healthcare should not be negotiated away in secrecy,” said Ms Kiejda.

“This will be a perfect opportunity for our government to tell the globe our world-class healthcare system is off limits when it comes to free trade deals.”

A copy of the *Negotiating Healthy Trade in Australia* report can be found [here](#).

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