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NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## Nurses and midwives oppose Trans-Pacific Partnership

The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) has joined with nurses, midwives and healthcare workers from across the Pacific, Latin America and North America, to condemn the controversial Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal.

The NSWNMA and other nursing organisations have signed on to an [open letter to trade ministers and government leaders](#), to highlight the substantial threat the TPP poses to equitable and accessible healthcare.

General Secretary of the NSWNMA, Brett Holmes, said thousands of nurses and midwives in Australia shared grave concerns, along with many organisations across the 12 countries throughout the Asia Pacific region involved in the TPP.

“We’ve been given assurances from the Minister for Trade that our healthcare system will be unaffected, but these assurances don’t stack up to academic rigour. As healthcare professionals, we base our actions on evidence not hearsay, that’s why we’re imploring the Abbott Government not to sign onto the TPP until the text is released in full and the community can have an open debate,” Mr Holmes said.

“In Australia, nurses and midwives have a legal obligation to speak up when healthcare is being put at risk. We’re not opposed to trade, but we do oppose the profits of multinationals being put before our community’s health needs and the TPP is doing just that.”

Professor Caroline Homer, President of the Australian College of Midwives, said that consideration of the consequences for communities and families in the TPP must come before the influence of multinational companies.

The open letter explains how the TPP will result in the cost of medicines rising, as access to generic medicines is delayed and pharmaceutical manufacturers are given unprecedented access to government decision-making bodies. The inclusion of Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) processes will prevent governments from making the policy decisions that save lives.

The letter also raises concerns about harmful effects, such as limits on government’s ability to regulate healthcare providers; restrictions on adequate food labelling; and opening the door for private healthcare multinationals to have a greater influence on healthcare policy.

“The principles of universal healthcare are based on equitable access to affordable healthcare. The TPP undermines those principles. Nurses, midwives and health workers know what happens when profit is put before people in the health system,” said Rosa Pavanelli, General Secretary of Public Services International (PSI).

“In an age where governments around the world are commenting about the increasing costs of healthcare, their trade ministers are negotiating a deal that will see the cost of healthcare rise purely to the benefit of multinational companies’ profit margins.”

“With the USA Fast Track legislation debate highlighting the mainstream anger in the USA and around the world, healthcare workers are desperately concerned that people’s health is being pushed aside in the interests of profit and wider geopolitical manoeuvring,” said Ms Pavanelli.

“The secrecy of this deal is hiding the true impacts. This is why we call for a halt to negotiations, for the text to be released and to allow qualified healthcare academics to make open assessments of the impact. Healthcare decisions belong out in the open within our democratic structures, not to be traded as if it is a shipment of wheat.”

A recent Australian academic review has found [multiple concerns about the impact of the TPP](#). This was based on the available knowledge of the TPP, through leaks.

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