Right now the Australian Government is negotiating a new trade agreement with 11 other countries\(^1\).

**The result of these negotiations threatens the existence of our Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).**

Through the PBS, the Government subsidises the cost of medicines for most medical conditions. Most of the listed medicines are dispensed by pharmacists and are used by patients at home. Price reduction as a result of the PBS can be anywhere between 10% and 90%.

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**Want to do something about it?**

1. **Write to, or meet with, your Local Government representative or Federal MP saying that you oppose the TPPA.** Contact the NSWNMA for tips and advice on how to do this.

2. **Sign the petition available at:**

3. **There's a lot more to know about the TPPA, like the affect it will have on internet use, the fact that negotiations are being held in secret and that we won't get to know the outcome and that we certainly won't get to vote on it. For detailed information go to the AFTINET website [http://aftinet.org.au/cms](http://aftinet.org.au/cms)**

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\(^1\)The US, NZ, Canada, Mexico, Peru, Chile, Singapore, Brunei, Malaysia, Japan and Vietnam
Why would our Government trade away the PBS?

The PBS ensures that our tax dollars are spent efficiently by comparing the need, price and efficacy of medicines. American pharmaceutical companies see this as a barrier to free trade, a barrier to greater profits. If Australia scrapped its PBS the way the American pharmaceutical companies want us to, then we will all be paying more for our medicines.

These same trade negotiations will see the life of pharmaceutical patents extend well beyond 20 years. This will mean that cheaper generic versions of a new drug can’t be made. People who rely on generic medicines will have to wait longer for cheaper life saving drugs. For people in developing countries, that’s a death sentence. It’s also a major concern for Australian pensioners and anyone else who relies on cheaper medicines.

Why would our Government put the profits of multinational pharmaceutical companies ahead of Australians’ health care needs? We don’t know. But we do know that as nurses and midwives we shouldn’t let it happen.

It gets worse

Not only will we pay more for medicines, our government is willing to give foreign companies the right to sue us should we introduce laws that seek to protect people’s health or the environment. Under this trade agreement Australia would lose its sovereign right to regulate in the interests of health or the environment.

We could also lose the gains we have made in food labelling, allowing consumers to know whether a product is healthy for us, because again, this is seen as a barrier to profit.

While the trade agreements being negotiated massively protect companies’ rights to profit, there are no real protections for workers’ rights and even less protection for the environment. There are rights for a company if a

government doesn’t allow their activity because it will harm the environment, but nothing to protect people and the world in which we live. Basically the only thing that matters in this agreement is company profit.

What the NSWNMA is doing

This is why the NSWNMA is joining hundreds of other organisations around the world in opposing the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA). We demand that the Government either reveal what they are negotiating to the Australian Public, allowing community debate prior to agreement, or that the Australian Government walks away from the negotiations.

Would you like to learn more?

1. Visit our website and go to www.nswma.asn.au/get-involved/tax-justice
2. Contact the Association via email gensec@nswma.asn.au or phone the Association (8595 1234 or 1300 367 962) and ask to speak with Organiser Michael Whaites.