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MEDIA RELEASE
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Health professionals say TPPA risks climate and health protection

OraTaiao: The New Zealand Climate and Health Council warns that negotiations over the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) threaten New Zealand's ability to protect our climate and health.

The Council's ongoing concerns are voiced in an article in NZ Doctor online today, together with 9 other health professional groups representing doctors, nurses, midwives, medical students, academics and health promoters.

The biggest threat is the 'Investor State Dispute Settlement' (ISDS) provisions. This mechanism allows overseas companies, including fossil fuel companies, to sue our Government if local law changes to bring down greenhouse gas emissions might affect their value or profits.

This is happening overseas already, for example, in Germany where measures to reduce the damaging effects of carbon dioxide emissions from a coal-fired power plant have been subject to an investment dispute.

'Climate change is already contributing to the global burden of disease and premature death, with worse to come' says Dr Alex Macmillan of OraTaiao: The NZ Climate and Health Council. 'Climate change is a health threat for all New Zealanders, with Māori, Pacific people, children, the elderly, and low income groups likely to be the hardest hit'.

'For a just transition to a low emissions economy, we need to put people's health first – not the profits of overseas companies. New Zealand needs to remain a free democracy to protect our climate, our health, our country and our future' Dr Macmillan ends.

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OraTaiao: The New Zealand Climate and Health Council comprises senior doctors and other health professionals concerned with climate change as a serious public health threat. They also promote the positive health gains that can be achieved through action to address climate change. See: www.orataiao.org.nz

About Climate Change and Health

Climate and health information is available in the New Zealand College of Public Health Medicine's policy statement on climate change:

http://www.nzcpm.org.nz/media/67575/2013_11_6_climate_change_substantive_policy_final-corrected_.pdf