

NOT NEGOTIABLE!

The sovereign right to strong and precautionary laws and regulations on all new technologies and their products, including moratoria and labelling



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The GM-free Australia Alliance calls on TPPA negotiators to respect:

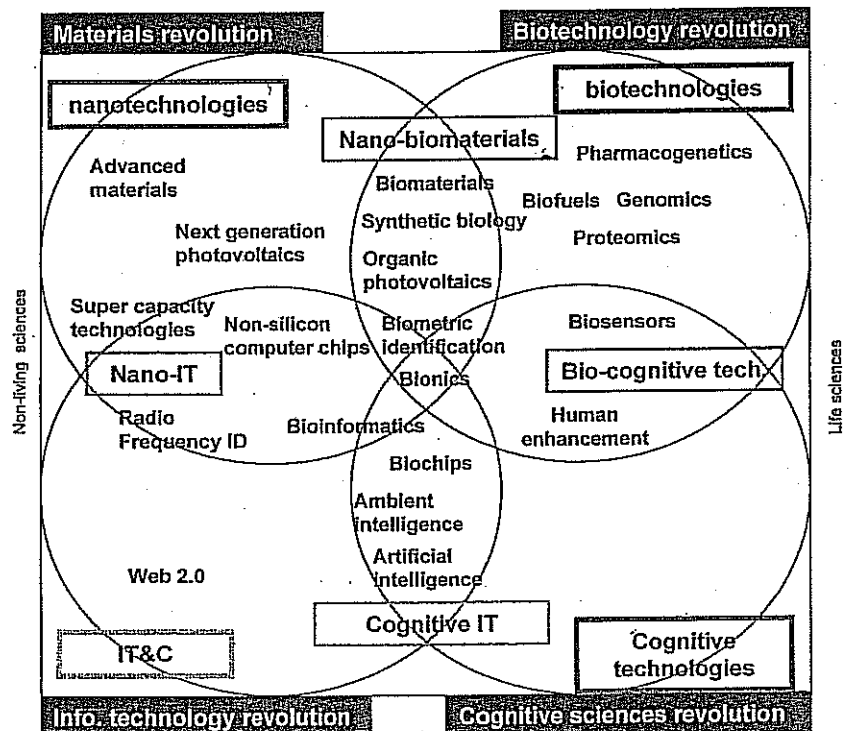
- the right to make strict precautionary laws, regulations and labelling of all organisms (including seed, crop plants, animals and micro-organisms), foods and pharmaceuticals made using Genetic Manipulation (GM) techniques; and
- the right to make strict precautionary laws, regulations and labelling of all other vanguard technologies and their products, including nanotechnology, synthetic biology, irradiation, etc.

Parliaments should insist the draft TPPA be published for public and parliamentary scrutiny, debate and amendment prior to it being signed or ratified.

This Australian government vision of future emerging & converging technologies and their products shows why strong precautionary laws and regulations are necessary in the public interest – to protect public health and safety, the environment, biosecurity and quarantine, and the social values and norms of fairness, justice and equity, which must always have precedence over trade imperatives.

Future vision, adapted from the Ratenau Institute by Australian National Enabling Technologies Strategy (NETS), based in the Commonwealth Department of Science and Innovation.
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Converging technologies and industries of the future



Please see over

The proposed TPPA is against the public interest

US government proposals serve the goals of transnational corporations. The Biotechnology Industry Organisation (BIO) in Washington DC projects the interests of GM and agrichemical corporations globally. Monsanto, Cargill and US Wheat Associates also lobbied the US Trade representative to weaken other countries' regulation of Genetically Manipulated Organisms (GMOs).

What BIO wants from the TPPA

- a common regulatory approach and disciplines for agricultural biotechnology;
- remove any asynchronous approvals (between parties) by developing a common framework and practices for the approval of agricultural GM products;
- remove all barriers to trade in agricultural products derived from biotechnology;
- regulatory frameworks to be streamlined, objective, science based and proportionate to the risk of intended use;
- labeling be consistent with the US Food and Drug Admin (FDA) rules so any mandatory or required labeling of GM products be science-based and only where a foods' nutritional or health-related character (toxicity, allergenicity, or composition) is changed significantly;
- voluntary labeling to be truthful and not misleading;
- the Cartagena Protocol to the CBD (Biosafety Protocol) is counter to rules that foster growth in the trade of products derived from GM and GM crop cultivation;
- promote science-based functioning regulatory systems in the Biosafety Protocol and not advocate policies would result in unscientific and unduly burdensome requirements for trade and cultivation of GM agricultural crops and foods;
- allow low levels of GM in farm products - Codex's *Annex on Food Safety Assessment in Situations of Low-Level Presence of Recombinant-DNA Plant Material in Food*.

Gene Ethics' rejects BIO's agenda

- the USA has the weakest GM regulations in the world, allowing self-assessment and marketing of GMOs without independent assessment. It must not be imposed;
- uniform approvals everywhere would remove the discretion of national regulators to reject applications to license GMOs, even for sound scientific reasons;
- removes parties' right to refuse access to GM products, even on the scientific grounds in the Biosafety Protocol, agreed by 162 countries;
- the USA's hands-off no-regulation system fast tracks GM applications by allowing self-assessment and voluntary notification. 'Science-based' is code for unscientific.
- the US FDA does not require any GM foods to be labelled yet this proposal would weaken other countries' capacity to inform citizens through labelling GM products. Health and nutrition information are only some legitimate reasons to require a label on food;
- all labels should tell the truth. But BIO wants GM-free labels banned, claiming they imply something wrong with GM food products;
- 162 countries signed & ratified the Biosafety Protocol, but the USA, Australia, Singapore, Chile, Canada and some others have not. The Protocol is a scientific agreement for the safe international transfer, handling and use of GMOs. As the USA is not even a member of the Convention on Biological Diversity, to which the Protocol is an annexe, they have no moral or legal authority to dictate terms related to the Protocol and its implementation;
- GM crop contamination is inevitable in weeds, conventional varieties and related plants. The non-scientific industry concept 'substantial equivalence enables routine genetic pollution.

Ref: <http://www.bio.org/advocacy/letters/bio-comments-proposed-accession-malaysia-trans-pacific-partnership-tpa-negotiations>

We resist and critique the TPPA agenda, set by giant transnational corporations (TNCs), that want to remove the many environmental, health, cultural and social policies which they claim are barriers to trade. But much so-called trade is really the movement of products and profits within these companies, to maximize profits, exploit cheap resources and labour, and minimize taxation. For instance, they seek to: scuttle the Australian Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme that keeps medicine prices much lower and more affordable than in the USA; impose special rights for corporations to sue governments for policy decisions that disadvantage business, such as plain cigarette packaging; prevent GM food labeling and GMO regulation; undermine local jobs and fair, enforceable employment conditions; and weaken environmental protections.

New nano and synthetic biology technologies have no history of safe use so they must be scientifically assessed and regulated without restraint.