

## FAST-TRACK TPPA (by Anahera Herbert-Graves)

At [Waitangi](#) on 5<sup>th</sup> March, the [Iwi Chairs Forum](#) put a number of questions to [John Key](#) on a range of issues they are all dealing with; specifically oil and minerals, [Whānau Ora](#), climate change, freshwater, education, Treaty claims, [E Tuu Whānau](#), housing, and constitutional change.



When it came time to answer, Key deferred all issues to a relevant Minister, except for two questions put to him by [Professor Margaret Mutu](#); “Will the detailed content of the TPPA [[Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement](#)] be made available to the public, before it is signed by the National government?” and “Will the National government insist on an exit clause in the TPPA which does not require the approval of any other parties to the agreement?”

Essentially Key’s answer was that his government would never sign the agreement before it had been released ... to Parliament.

Although typically quick, confident and vague, the very fact that it was he who answered the questions showed that John Key is the lead man on the TPPA negotiations, and not [Tim Groser](#), nominal Minister of Trade. So what Key has to say on it is, pardon the pun, key.

Last Friday, speaking in Parliament, Key [claimed](#) that the consultation processes undertaken on TPP by his government were amongst the most extensive undertaken by any New Zealand government for any trade negotiation. “Public comment for the TPP was first sought in 2008 and has been invited since,” he said. I must have blinked, because I never saw the pānui asking for public comment. Did you?

Key also claimed that TPP negotiators had conducted a proactive consultation process, including “... regular meetings with business groups, local councils, the health sector and other representatives, Unions and other NGOs, and other individuals and academics [and] opposition parties ...”

Good golly, how did I miss all that consultation? Does that mean I can catch up on all things TPP if I call on the [Kaitia Chamber of Commerce](#), or local representatives on the [Far North District Council](#), [Northland Regional Council](#), and [Northland District Health Board](#)? Does anyone have [Toss Kitchen’s](#) phone number?

Starting yesterday and ending this Friday, TPP negotiators are meeting [in Singapore](#). That will be followed by a meeting of TPP Trade Ministers next week on [February 22-23](#), where the US administration hopes to [finish the deal](#).

The TPP is [far more than a trade agreement](#). It will give foreign corporates the same rights as humans and put the right of those corporates to make a profit above human rights, as well as above government responsibilities to make and pass laws that protect their human citizens.

New Zealanders cannot rely on John Key to protect them under the TPP. Ironically their main hope lies in the US itself, where [Obama’s](#) push to [‘fast track’](#) the TPP through Congress, has seen public pressure against it [go through the roof](#). And where the US goes, Key and co will follow – on the fast track.

