ANOTHER INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT BEING SIGNED BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

“It’s very concerning that the Government has signed an international trade agreement locking in future rules for government purchasing without giving the public a chance to make submissions,” says Ian Powell, Executive Director of the Association of Salaried Medical Specialists (ASMS).

He echoed concerns raised by the Council of Trade Unions (CTU) about Parliament’s refusal to hear submissions on the Government Procurement Agreement deal, which has the potential to impact significantly on the health sector.

“We’ve seen governments acting in secrecy around another international agreement, the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) and now we’re seeing it with this one as well. These agreements have the potential to cause significant harm and they need to be open to critique before decisions are made.”

Mr Powell says the CTU requested an opportunity for public submissions on the Government Procurement Agreement but was turned down.

“It’s a fundamentally flawed process if people are denied an opportunity to assess the possible impact of trade deals like these. That’s not how democracy is supposed to work.”

The New Zealand Nurses Organisation has raised concerns that the procurement agreement will require most (but not all) district health boards (DHBs) to put overseas providers on a level footing with local providers for major purchases.

“That means DHBs may no longer be able to opt for New Zealand services or contractors as their first choice, and they may not be able to exclude suppliers who also deal in products such as tobacco. These circumstances would cause considerable concern among medical specialists and other health professionals.”
ENDS

Ian Powell
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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