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MEDIA RELEASE

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## **Devils in the Detail mean the US Free Trade Agreement can be stopped, say community groups**

"The USFTA is a bad deal for Australia and can still be stopped," **Dr Patricia Ranald, policy manager at the Public Interest Advocacy Centre and convenor of the Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network of 85 community organisations**, said today. "We will use the next three months of Parliamentary inquiries to expose the devils in the detail like higher costs for medicines and less Australian content in new forms of media. Howard and Bush may have a signing ceremony in May, but the USFTA will still be conditional on the implementing legislation, and we will be urging the Senate to block it when it comes up for voting after June."

**Dr Ranald was speaking before the Media Conference to launch 'Ten Devils in the Detail of the USFTA', at 12 noon at the Jubilee Room, NSW Parliament House, Macquarie St, Sydney.**

**Dr Peter Sainsbury, President, Public Health Association of Australia**, said: 'The USFTA gives drug companies the right to seek reviews of decisions under the PBS if their drugs are not listed and to seek price increases after they are listed. It also sets up a joint committee with the US to review health policy. The US Trade Representative has told a US Senate committee that drug prices will rise under this system. The delight with which the drug companies have greeted the FTA must make all Australians suspicious of our government's reassurances'.

**Fiona Press, AFI Award winning actor and NSW Vice President of the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance**, said: 'Our entertainment industry, based on modest Australian content rules, is world renowned and growing. By severely limiting Australian content in new forms of media in this hurried and badly negotiated agreement the government is cutting the industry off at the knees. Why?'

**The Rev. Harry Herbert, Uniting Church Minister and Executive Director, UnitingCare**, said: "Human services like aged care should be available to all based on need. The USFTA treats aged care as a traded good and opens it up to investment by US corporations. The danger is that these corporations will reduce standards and take resources out of the sector."

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