

# Final version of TPP trade deal released

Agreement will reduce tariffs in Asia-Pacific countries

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The final version of a landmark deal aimed at cutting trade barriers in some of the Asia-Pacific's fastest-growing economies was released on Wednesday, signalling the pact was a step closer to reality even without its star member the US.

More than 20 provisions have been suspended or changed in the final text ahead of the deal's official signing in March, including rules around intellectual property originally included at the behest of Washington.

The original 12-member deal was thrown into limbo early last year when US President Donald Trump withdrew from the agreement to prioritise protecting US jobs.

The 11 remaining nations, led by Japan, finalised a revised trade pact in January, called the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). It is expected to be signed in Chile on March 8.

The deal will reduce tariffs in economies that together amount to more than 13 per cent of the global GDP — a total of \$10 trillion. With the US, it would have represented 40 per cent. "The big changes with TPP 11 are the suspension of a whole lot of the provisions of the agreement. They have suspended many of the controversial ones, particularly around pharmaceuticals," said Kimberlee Weatherall, professor of law at the University of Sydney.

Many of these changes had been



New Zealand's Minister for Trade and Export Growth David Parker speaks to reporters during a news conference on the revised text for the agreed Trans-Pacific Partnership in Wellington, New Zealand, on Wednesday

## IN A NUTSHELL

- 12 nations bordering the Pacific Ocean signed up for TPP in February 2016
- Agreement was designed to create a new single market, something like that of the EU
- US participation was the major lynchpin for the deal
- On the campaign trail Trump called it a "horrible deal"
- US opponents described TPP as a secretive deal favouring big business and other countries at the cost of American jobs and sovereignty

inserted into the original TPP 12 at the demand of US negotiators, such as rules ramping up intellectual property protection of pharmaceuticals, which some governments and activists worried would raise the costs of medicine. The success of the deal has been touted by officials in Japan and other member countries as an

antidote to counter growing US protectionism, and with the hope that Washington would eventually sign back up. "CPTPP has become more important because of the growing threats to the effective operation of the World Trade Organisation rules," New Zealand Trade Minister David Parker said on Wednesday.

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