

## GREENS JOIN CALLS FOR MORATORIUM ON PACIFIC TRADE DEAL

Greens NSW Senate candidate Lee Rhiannon today supported the call by Pacific NGOs, churches and trade unions for a moratorium on negotiations for PACER-Plus, the proposed free trade agreement between Australia, NZ and Pacific Island countries.

PACER-Plus will be discussed at the Pacific Islands Forum being held in Vanuatu today.

“The major parties should listen to civil society in the Pacific and put their foot on the brake in Pacific trade negotiations”, said Ms Lee Rhiannon.

“Pacific countries have explicitly called for the time and resources to hold national consultations prior to negotiations. To date, these calls have been ignored and negotiations are moving ahead in spite of capacity of Pacific island countries.

“Today Churches, NGOs and Unions across the Pacific joined together to call for a moratorium on PACER negotiations because their local communities have not been consulted widely about the agreement and its potential impacts.

“These groups are concerned that the Australian government is pushing a poorly designed free trade deal that will undermine the economic and social wellbeing of Pacific Island communities and tie the hands of government to make decisions in their national interest.

“The PACER-Plus trade agreement is poised to have a major impact in many Pacific Island countries.

“A recent report commissioned by the Secretariat of the Pacific Island Forum warned that some Pacific countries stand to lose up to US\$10 million annually in revenue if PACER goes ahead.

“This cut to revenue will seriously affect the ability of small island nations to provide essential services such as health, education and water to their populations.

“As a major donor in the Pacific Islands region, the Australian government wields significant influence in trade negotiations.

“The Greens are calling on Labor and the Coalition to listen to this broad coalition of Pacific groups and back off the negotiations until there has been a national consultation process in the countries involved”, said Ms Rhiannon

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<http://greens.org.au/content/greens-join-calls-moratorium-pacific-trade-deal>