

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, 9 April 2014

ATMS calls on Federal Government support and recognition for homœopathy

NHMRC highlights the lack of quality studies and evidence available, not ineffectiveness!

The Australian Traditional Medicine Society (ATMS) is concerned by the release of the Draft Information Paper on homœopathy (Draft Paper), released by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) today, as its findings could affect a number of natural health practitioners' livelihoods.

Trevor Le Breton, CEO of ATMS says the organisation supports the need to establish and maintain high professional standards across all Natural Medicine modalities, for both the protection and benefit of consumers and the advancement of the industry. However, the results and potential implications of the Draft Paper threaten the livelihood of hundreds of practitioners who rely on their current health fund status to make homœopathy accessible to their clients and the general public.

"The Draft Paper outlines the findings of a literature review that aims to look at the effectiveness of homœopathy, but ultimately only reveals the lack of quality trials and primary studies available, rather than compelling evidence of the modality's ineffectiveness," said Mr Le Breton.

"In our January 2013 Submission to the Chief Medical Officer as part of the Natural Therapies – Review of Private Health Insurance Rebate, we provided numerous examples of studies that have shown that homœopathy is superior to placebo in the majority of cases.

"What we need is funding and support from the Federal Government to conduct more clinical studies and establish compelling scientific evidence so that homœopathy is afforded the same level of opportunities and recognition as other modalities.

"In the meantime, homœopathic practitioners who have spent years studying and successfully providing treatment for a variety of ailments and conditions should not be made to suffer simply because the quantity and quality of the literature and studies has been inadequate.

"To provide some context, it needs to be recognised that, according to the British Medical Journal, only around 30% of all conventional medical procedures are supported by a strong evidence base. In other words, only 3 out of every 10 medical treatments provided by General Practitioners have strong and credible research-based evidence to support their use.

ATMS will continue to advocate for the rights and abilities of our members to practice and be recognised as qualified healthcare providers," said Mr Le Breton.

Figures show that interest in natural medicine is growing both here in Australia and around the world. The NHMRC reports today that the annual revenue from the sale of natural medicines and therapies totals \$3.55 billion.

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“As the interest and number of Australians turning to natural medicine increases, access to these medicines and treatments should not become restricted but instead supported by professional associations and organisations like ATMS and the NHMRC,” Mr Le Breton added.

Homœopathy is a form of medicine that is more than 200 years old and is legally recognised in more than 80 countries. The World Health Organisation claims that homœopathy is the second most widely used medicine in the world.

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Notes to Editors:

The Australian Traditional-Medicine Society (ATMS) is Australia’s largest national professional association of natural medicine practitioners. ATMS is a multi-disciplinary association representing around 12,000 accredited practitioners throughout Australia.

ATMS promotes and represents professional practitioners of natural medicine, who are encouraged to pursue the highest ideals of professionalism in their natural medicine practice and education.

For more information visit: www.atms.com.au