



Australian Traditional-
Medicine Society Ltd

**2017 – 2020
STRATEGIC
PLAN**



ATMS

Leader of the Natural Medicine Industry
www.atms.com.au

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Australian Traditional-Medicine Society (ATMS) is on the threshold of a new era for the natural health industry in Australia. It has formidable strength, derived from over 30 years of representing practitioners. To guide the next stage of growth and the important changes that the natural health industry will undergo, the ATMS conducted a major survey and planning process. Input was solicited from the Board of Directors, management and staff, and from the membership with over 1190 members responded.

Based on the results of this survey, the following strategic plan was developed. This strategic plan provides a clear blueprint for the ATMS to fulfil its mission of being the leader of the natural medicine industry.

At its core, the plan outlines how ATMS will provide member services such as continuing professional education, research in accredited modalities, and advocacy with government bodies and private health insurers via health funds. It describes a focused direction for maximizing our strengths of communication and representation for our members.

Moving forward, we remain committed to putting ideas into action that will promote practitioners and natural medicine in Australia.

The Australian Traditional-Medicine Board of Directors 2017



Vision

Leading the advancement of natural medicine in Australia.

Mission

To promote, represent and support practitioners of natural medicine professions and occupations who are encouraged to pursue the highest ideals of professionalism in their natural medicine practice and education.

ATMS

Profile

The Australian Traditional Medicine Society's (ATMS) aim is to acknowledge a variety of natural medicine modalities, providing modality recognition and accreditation for practitioners and safety assurance for the public.

The society is united in the beliefs underpinning the following values.

- Staying up to date in regard to regulation issues affecting the natural medicine industry.
- Consultation with other professional associations, stakeholders, educational institutions and government representatives.
- Encouraging the public to seek out ATMS accredited members.

Overarching Goals

Over 1190 members responded to the survey, identifying categories that are forefront in their minds as practitioners. This is almost double the number of responses that were received in the last survey, in 2015. The time and energy of engagement from the members is greatly appreciated as this informs the goals that the Board need to prioritise.

Four Strategic Goals were identified through the consultation process. They will be used to identify the work of the ATMS Board and management in the next few years.

The four Strategic Goals are:

1. Continuing Professional Education (CPE) Program
2. Relationships with private health insurers via health funds (HF)
3. Advocacy with government and media stakeholders
4. Member support

These are essential and interlocking pieces of the overall strategy.

Continuing Professional Education

Provide quality CPE in accredited modalities around Australia.



Relationships with private health insurers via health funds

Represent ATMS accredited members to private health insurers via health funds and ensure ongoing support for natural medicine in private health insurance.



Advocacy with government and media stakeholders

Promote ATMS accredited member services to government bodies and advocate for their continued use in the Australian healthcare landscape.



Member support

Ensure best practice information is available to accredited members and support members in their business and professionalism.





Strategic Goal 1

Continuing Professional Education (CPE)

CPE is a Constitutional requirement for members to maintain their accreditation status with ATMS, it is also a criteria for their health fund provider status. Improving the CPE program overall will benefit all members. CPE rated over 24% of the top four priorities and was by far the most repeated response. This is one of the major services that the Society provides to its members.

Key objectives

1. Increase the geographical spread of CPE events
2. Offer webinars for bodywork practitioners
3. Offer low cost webinars relating to compliance
4. Promote the CPE program in government and relevant stakeholder engagement packs
5. Increase modality specific CPE events

Current landscape

Over the past 3 years the CPE program has expanded with a variety of events for bodywork and ingestive practitioners and an increase in webinars.

Total number of seminars held in the last financial year was 62 with 1,525 attendees. There were fifteen webinars with 1, 634 attendees.

The geographical spread included Sydney: 21, regional NSW 19, Melbourne 5, Adelaide 4, Queensland 8, Perth 2, Tasmania 2 and Canberra 1.

With a dedicated ATMS stakeholder manager, there has been the addition of high profile presenters, more geographical spread covering a number of modalities, a national seminar series and a symposium.

Strategic goal strategies

- Ensure the CPE program includes a geographical spread of events. There is a need to balance the delivery of CPE in regional areas or where there are fewer members with the need for responsible financial management.
- A balance between the delivery of clinical and non-clinical (business management etc.) CPE and a spread of modality specific training that reflects the modality-makeup of the ATMS membership must be maintained.
- Programme 'free' webinars for compliance.
- There is a need for CPE offerings that will not only assist members in accumulating points, but will enhance their knowledge and skills.
- Ensure promotion and advertising of events is maintained to achieve a high number of members in an event.

rebates from major health fund providers



+ more

+ WOLG

Strategic Goal 2

Relationships with Private Health Insurers via Health Funds

During the past few years, rebates for natural medicine services have been discussed as part of the Australian government's analysis of Medicare and the health fund subsidy. Australians have the privilege of being able to claim for natural medicine services through the private health fund industry.

This was a priority for 22% of our survey respondents.

Key Objectives

1. Apply to BUPA (and other relevant HFs) to accredit the modality of nutrition
2. Encourage private health insurers via health funds, to maintain the private health insurance rebate by government for complementary medicine
3. Increase the quality of relationships and dialogue with all relevant health funds and manage these in a planned and deliberate manner

Current landscape

Over the past 3 years, the CEO has been working on strengthening the relationships with health fund managers. The ATMS has undergone a number of audits from the health funds and has been able to demonstrate satisfactory compliance.

Health funds have participated in the Education Symposium for the past 2 years with managers from Medibank and BUPA speaking to education providers and taking part in an Q&A.

Both government parties have a policy to remove the 30% rebate for some of the ATMS accredited modalities.

Strategic goal strategies

- Monitoring the number of accredited modalities that receive rebates and the number of funds providing the rebate for our clients.
- Increase coverage for nutrition. Send criteria to BUPA for why nutrition should be included in their list of modalities.
- Consult with health fund managers for complementary health with regards to massage therapy criteria and present a case for RPL acknowledgement.
- Develop a strong relationship of alliance with health fund managers for government lobbying



Strategic Goal 3a

Advocacy with government stakeholders

Government advocacy is an important issue for ATMS members, with just over 19% of respondents raising this issue.

Key objectives

1. Increase the quality of relationships and dialogue with all relevant government stakeholders and manage these in a planned and deliberate manner.
2. Develop and pursue an active collaborative partnership with all state and territory health care departments and complaints commissions.
3. Develop a research strategy to counteract the NTRAC review on 17 modalities.
4. Develop a strategy to enable records for natural medicine consultations to be included in eHealth records.

Current landscape

The government pack was distributed to all sitting members of parliament ahead of the Natural Medicine Week breakfast at parliament house in May 2017.

The CEO has written to all political parties for information on their policy regarding natural medicine.

ATMS directors represent the members on a number of government agencies, for example, the TGAAC and the Australian Industry Skills Committee via the Industry Reference Committee.

Strategic goal strategies

- Advocacy at government level is imperative to promote recognition of the contributions that natural medicine practitioners make to the health of the Australian population, particularly in health promotion and illness prevention, with the consequent benefits for the Australian economy.
- Identify the decision-makers, know what their priorities are, what are their timelines and aligning our priorities with theirs.
- Research Committee to create a pool of evidence for the 17 modalities
- Start dialogue with government health department for eHealth records for natural medicine.



Strategic Goal 3b

Media Representation

Media representation closely followed government advocacy as an important issue for ATMS members, with 17.5% of respondents raising this issue.

Key objectives

1. Vigorously promote ATMS to the public, using all relevant channels with a focus on public consumer groups as a form of external validation of natural medicine and our members
2. Ensure press release responses to negative stories regarding natural medicine
3. Have good evidence available for media packs of different modalities

Current landscape

Over the past 3 years the CEO has been working with the marketing company Zadro on our media and PR campaigns. Current Facebook views are 1.5 million.

Natural Medicine Week has been successful for two years, with public and practitioners participating and promoting natural medicine with a dedicated website .

The current President has had media training and is the spokesperson for the Society with regards to our modalities, the CEO is the ATMS spokesperson for all other issues.

Strategic goal strategies

- Establish our own channels of communications with consumers across relevant social media platforms.
- Set up a procedure for press releases and responses to media stories.
- Research Committee to provide evidence for modalities. (link to government goal)



Strategic Goal 4

Member support

Member support involves far more than having someone in the office who can answer questions for individual members. It is about providing a service for our whole community of natural medicine practitioners. A

total of 11% of survey respondents wanted member support to be a priority.

Key Objectives

1. Increase membership through member retention and growth in new members
2. Provide evidence from research to our members in their respective modalities, where possible
3. Develop and launch a series of member support initiatives designed to raise the professional capacity and standing of members

Current landscape

Our members are supported by an office staff as well the expert skills and knowledge of members of the Board. A number of resources for members have been created in the past years, these include CPE, EBSCO and research grants. Our members have access to information through the website , Wise and Well and the Journal. Open rates for the Wise and Well have increased over the past few years.

Strategic goal strategies

- Form a working group to design new membership strategies from four main catchment areas – students, existing practitioners, professional members of other associations, member retention.
- Research Committee to provide evidence for modalities (link to Goal 3).
- Create member support strategies (link to Goal 1) plus other initiatives.