

30 January 2025

By Email: [PreBudgetSubmissions@treasury.gov.au](mailto:PreBudgetSubmissions@treasury.gov.au)

The Hon. Stephen Jones MP  
Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Financial Services  
C/- Budget Policy Division

**Re: Budget Submission for Fiscal Year 2025 - Support for Natural Medicine**

Dear Minister Jones,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Australian Traditional-Medicine Society (ATMS) to present our budget submission for the fiscal year 2025. ATMS is dedicated to promoting the significant role that natural medicine practitioners play in the health and wellbeing of Australians. With a national network of 7,033 accredited practitioners and over 4.3 million engaged followers on social media, our vision is to create a healthier world through the integration of natural medicine into mainstream healthcare.

**About ATMS**

ATMS is Australia's largest multi-modality national professional association, advocating for the collective interests of natural medicine practitioners. Our mission is to promote, represent, and support practitioners in achieving the highest standards of professionalism, education, and patient care.

Each year, we spearhead **Natural Medicine Week**, a national event that raises awareness and educates Australians on the benefits of natural therapies. The upcoming **Natural Medicine Week 2025 (May 19 - May 25)** will build on the success of previous years, which saw 4.3 Million Australians engage across traditional and social media platforms.

**Key Issues and Budget Requests**

To ensure the continued contribution of natural medicine practitioners to Australia's healthcare landscape, we respectfully request government support in the following areas:



## 1. Expedited Completion of the Natural Therapies Review

- **Background:** The Natural Therapies Review Expert Advisory Panel (NTREAP) was commissioned in 2018 to assess 16 natural therapies currently excluded from private health insurance coverage. The review remains unfinished.
- **Request:** Expedite the completion of this review and support the reinstatement of these therapies under private health insurance coverage.
- **Rationale:** Enabling Australians to access a broader range of evidence-based natural therapies under their health insurance plans will improve healthcare options, particularly for those managing chronic illnesses and seeking preventative health solutions.

## 2. Inclusion of Chinese Medicine Practitioners in Allied Health

- **Background:** Despite meeting the same registration requirements as other allied health practitioners, **Chinese Medicine practitioners are not classified as Allied Health providers** at the State level.
- **Request:** Align Chinese Medicine with other Allied Health services to allow access to Medicare MBS, DVA, and Extended Care Plans.
- **Rationale:** Recognising Chinese Medicine as an Allied Health profession will improve access to integrative healthcare services, particularly for patients in regional and low-income areas.

## 3. Proportional Research Funding for Natural Therapies

- **Background:** The natural medicine industry contributes significantly to the economy, generating **\$9.6 billion annually**, with **\$5.6 billion from supplement manufacturing and sales alone**.
- **Request:** Allocate proportional research funding for **natural therapies through the Australian Research Council (ARC) and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)**.
- **Rationale:** Increased funding will support evidence-based practice, innovation, and clinical research to enhance the credibility and integration of natural therapies within mainstream healthcare.

## 4. Investment in Preventative Health and Practitioner Training

- **Background:** Preventative health measures can reduce long-term healthcare costs by minimising the burden of chronic diseases.
- **Request:** Support **funding initiatives for practitioner training and continuing education** to equip natural medicine practitioners with the latest research and best practices.



- **Rationale:** Investing in practitioner education will strengthen Australia's preventative healthcare system, reducing reliance on costly medical interventions.

## 5. Increased Grants for Small Health Businesses

- **Background:** Small businesses in the health sector, including natural medicine practitioners, face increasing financial pressures due to rising operational costs.
- **Request:** Expand **financial support and grant programs for small healthcare businesses** to ensure their sustainability and growth.
- **Rationale:** Increased funding will allow practitioners to maintain their services, invest in necessary equipment, and continue providing essential healthcare to their communities.

## 6. Extension of GST Exemption to All Natural Therapies

- **Background:** Currently, **naturopathy is GST-exempt, while other natural therapies such as remedial massage and clinical nutrition are not.**
- **Request:** Extend **GST exemptions to all natural therapies** to reduce the financial burden on consumers.
- **Rationale:** Equitable tax treatment across all natural therapies will make holistic health solutions more affordable and accessible to Australians.

## Conclusion

ATMS is committed to **collaborating with the government** to enhance public health outcomes by integrating natural medicine into Australia's healthcare framework. Addressing these key issues will **strengthen preventative healthcare**, increase consumer choice, and support **small businesses in the health sector**.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss these proposals further and provide supporting data. Thank you for considering our recommendations, and we look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,



**Annie Gibbins**

Chief Executive Officer





Australian Traditional Medicine Society

