



Media Statement: Wednesday, 2 May 2018

NTRAC Review of Rebates on Natural Therapies is flawed according to leading natural medicine Association

The **Australian Traditional-Medicine Society (ATMS)** invites the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP, and Opposition Shadow Health Minister, Hon. Catherine King MP, to have a fully informed conversation with them about the contribution of natural medicine to preventative health, and to reconsider their proposed policy regarding the removal of the GST exemption for certain natural therapies.

Natural medicine is a major part of the health and wellbeing management of millions of Australians, with over 68% of the population having used some form of natural medicine in the last 12 months¹.

Charles Wurf, CEO of ATMS, which represents over 10,000 practitioners, said the policy authors need to fully consider the impact of their recommendations on the natural therapy industry, and the 28,000 small businesses in this sector.

“ATMS calls on the ALP to fully consider the unintended consequences of the proposed policy and the effect it may have on how Australians choose to manage their personal and preventative health.

“The ALP’s policy to remove the GST exemption from certain natural therapies is unlikely to generate the \$30 million, as they have suggested,” said Mr Wurf.

Furthermore, the proposed policy ignores the contribution to the economy of the natural medicine industry that employs 36,441 people in Australia² and currently contributes \$4.7 billion in revenue to the economy annually.

ATMS believe this policy puts small businesses and thousands of jobs at risk.

ATMS concludes that the cost analysis revealed in the *‘Review of the Australian Government Rebate on Natural Therapies for Private Health Insurance’* report by the Natural Therapies Review Advisory Committee, was deeply flawed and should not be informing public policy.

ATMS highlights three fundamental flaws in the report:

¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17718647> Xue et al. 2007 Complementary and Alternative Medicine Use in Australia: A National Population-Based Survey

² IBIS World Report, March 2018

1. The NTRAC report only takes into consideration studies published in English in the last five years.
2. It has excluded the significant body of evidence available in Naturopathy and Western Herbal Medicine, such as the well-researched use of herbs and supplements.
3. It has relied on only one type of evidence, Systematic Reviews, which collect and critically analyse multiple research papers. Systematic Reviews are not considered an adequate exploration of the available evidence.

As the leading Association for natural medicine practitioners in Australia, ATMS welcomes the opportunity to present research on the effectiveness of natural therapies and the difference it makes to millions of people every day.

-ENDS-

NOTES TO EDITORS:

Interviews with:

- Charles Wurf, CEO, ATMS, are available on request through the below contacts

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Image:

1. Charles Wurf, CEO, ATMS





About Natural Medicine Week

Natural Medicine Week, 21 – 27 May 2018, aims to promote, educate and raise awareness of the important role natural medicine practitioners play in the health and wellbeing of Australians. Proudly supported by the Australian Traditional-Medicine Society, Natural Medicine Week celebrates the three primary models of natural medicine; Ingestive Therapies, Bodywork and Massage, and Traditional Chinese Medicine.

www.naturalmedicineweek.com.au

About the Australian Traditional-Medicine Society:

The Australian Traditional-Medicine Society (ATMS) is the leader of the natural medicine industry, promoting and representing professional practitioners of natural medicine, who are encouraged to pursue the highest ideals of professionalism in their natural medicine practice and education. As Australia's largest national professional association for natural medicine practitioners, ATMS is a multi-disciplinary association representing over 10,000 accredited practitioners throughout Australia.

ATMS was founded in 1984 and is an incorporated not-for-profit company. In 2014 ATMS celebrated their 30th anniversary representing natural medicine practitioners in Australia. ATMS is governed by a Board of Directors, with specialised departments for Massage Therapy, Traditional Chinese Medicine, Homeopathy, Nutrition, Naturopathy and Western Herbal Medicine.

www.atms.com.au