



## MEDIA RELEASE

### Complementary Medicine Regulation Protects Consumers

Recent calls for changes to the regulation of complementary medicines are misinformed and not in consumer interests according to peak industry body, the Complementary Healthcare Council.

“With over 70% of Australians enjoying the health benefits of complementary medicines, calls for substantive change to the current regulations fly in the face of sound, efficient and economic health management and deny consumers their right to self manage their health in an entirely appropriate way.” said Executive Director, Dr Wendy Morrow.

The Complementary Healthcare Council supports enhancements to the existing model to ensure consumers can feel confident about the safety, quality and efficacy of complementary medicines but believes concerns about the operation of the regulatory system can be addressed within the current framework.

Since 2003, there have been two comprehensive, Government initiated reviews by relevant medical and non medical experts with full public consultation. Both reviews substantively supported the existing risk based regulatory framework subject to minor modifications.

“Analysing complaints in relation to weight loss products, as has been recently done, to justify proposed reform for the regulation of **all** listed complementary medicines is misguided and unnecessary. The suggested changes will in effect be to the detriment of public health by making fewer medicines available to consumers.

“If consumers are indeed to be protected, assessing the evidence in support of the products must continue to be the responsibility of the Therapeutics Goods Administration (TGA) (and not a non government body as has been suggested) because the TGA is best placed to provide the level of scrutiny and evaluation for the products in question.”

Despite recent public assertions, sponsors of complementary medicines are required to hold evidence of their product(s) efficacy and certify so at the time of listing. This data can be requested and reviewed at any time by the TGA.

An open and transparent complaints process is accessible to all consumers. If identified regulatory breaches are confirmed appropriate action will be taken to safeguard consumers. The CHC supports initiatives to implement a broader range of sanctions and to enhance the timeliness of the current process.

“These are not new recommendations and government, industry and other stakeholders have been actively involved in developing and implementing appropriate legislative amendments over a number of years through a well accepted and transparent public consultation process.” Dr Morrow added.

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