

Media Release

Industry calls for greater focus on advancing complementary medicines

The Complementary Healthcare Council of Australia (CHC) has called on the Federal Government to give greater focus to the important role complementary medicines make to people's health and well being, as well as acknowledge and support this growing manufacturing industry.

Lodging the Council's 2012-13 Pre-Budget Submission with Treasury, CHC Executive Director, Dr Wendy Morrow, said it is important that Government acknowledge that complementary medicines play an important and growing role in the well being of Australians.

“Over half the adult population in Australia purchases a complementary medicine at least every quarter.¹ Complementary medicines are an important part of the preventative health mix because they help Australians live healthier and more productive lives. Importantly, it also reduces the likelihood that these Australians will become a burden on the public health system.”

Growing consumer demand for complementary medicines is proof positive that Australian consumers see value in complementary medicines as well, with the industry today generating around \$2.3 billion in revenues² and \$230 million in GST revenue every year. The industry generates 5,000 highly-skilled manufacturing jobs, which indirectly support a further 60,000 jobs around the country.

Dr Morrow said that while it was clear that Government understood the importance of appropriate preventative health measures as part of the broader health mix for Australians, there has so far not been a focus on the positive benefits that complementary medicines bring to the table.

“The establishment in 2011 of the Australian National Preventive Health Agency was recognition by the Government that prevention in the first instance beats cure when a problem occurs. We want the Government to build on this and the complementary medicine industry can help deliver the preventative health outcomes Government is seeking. The industry wants to work with the Government to achieve this.

Dr Morrow particularly emphasised a number of barriers to growing this important industry.

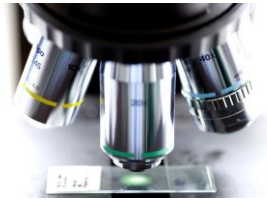
“Less than 1 per cent of National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) funding supports complementary medicine research. Additional funding support to the industry in peer-reviewable research would go a long way to helping the industry bring new and innovative products to market, to the direct benefit of consumers.”

In addition, Dr Morrow also said that a lack of appropriate intellectual property protections for complementary medicines, and other forms of support helping companies bring new products to the Australian market, are actively holding back the growth of this dynamic and innovative industry.

“We have companies who want to innovate and invest in the Industry, but with no IP or regulatory protection it's hard to advance. This is why our Budget Submission calls for market exclusivity and partnership from the Government in undertaking clinical trials. This Budget Submission is a constructive and confident step for our

¹ My Opinions Research for CHC May 2011

² CHC Complementary Medicines Industry Audit May 2011, available by request.



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Industry. I recommend that the Government strongly considers our recommendations, contributing to the advancement of a high growth Australian Industry through creating a regulatory environment which promotes innovation and allowing the complementary medicine industry to play its role in improving the population health outcomes for the country.”

concluded Dr Morrow.

The CHC's 2012-13 Pre-Budget Submission will be officially launched at the upcoming CHC 2012 Annual Parliamentary Reception, being held on 20 March 2012 in Canberra. Visit the [Events pages](#) of the CHC website for more details.

The full Pre-Budget Submission document can be accessed by visiting the [Political and Consumer Affairs](#) section of the CHC website.

For more information about the CHC and our work please visit our website or contact us directly: www.chc.org.au

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