

Media Release

CHC concerned by omission of complementary medicines

from TGA Advisory Council

The Complementary Healthcare Council (CHC) of Australia has expressed disappointment following the announcement by the Parliamentary Secretary for Health in relation to appointments to the new Therapeutic Goods Advisory Council (TGAC).

In a move indicating the Government's apathetic attitude towards an Industry making up a significant portion of the TGA's portfolio, Complementary Medicines have been crudely omitted from fields of interest represented on the Advisory Council.

Noting that the Council has been created for the purpose of guiding the implementation of recommendations impacting heavily on the Complementary Medicines Industry, the absence of representation raises questions around the knock on effect this will have on both the industry and the 75% of consumers choosing to take complementary medicines.

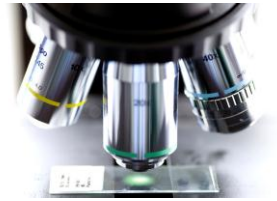
Following the announcement, CHC Executive Director, Dr Wendy Morrow, expressed her concern with the exclusion.

"The Advisory Council was formed in order to improve transparency and engagement by the TGA. It is therefore inconceivable that the Council does not include a representative with knowledge or expertise relevant to Complementary Medicines. This is particularly significant when a considerable proportion of the recommendations the Council will advise on are directly related to Complementary Medicines" she highlighted.

"Not only does this decision show a disregard for Industry but also for the consumers who take complementary medicines. Without a representative on the Council with experience in the complementary medicines field, there is no voice for the sector or for the consumers affected by the implementation of the Blueprint recommendations," she concluded.

There has been strong engagement with the TGA since the introduction of the Government's TGA reform document earlier this year. The CHC continues to drive towards regulatory changes that will not only achieve the Government's objectives but that are appropriate to both consumers and industry. As part of Industry's long term, ongoing engagement with the TGA, the CHC has also been a significant voice on the TGA's Therapeutic Industry Consultative Committee (TICC), representing the industry on critical discussions around Therapeutic Industry issues.

Throughout discussions around the development of the new Advisory Committee, initially conceived as an extension of the TICC, the CHC has continued to advocate for the inclusion of a representative of the complementary medicines field. The CHC also strongly voiced this recommendation in its response to the



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release of the Blueprint reforms document (recommendation 1),¹ specifically relevant considering the impact of the reforms on the complementary medicines industry.

Dr Morrow therefore expressed her frustration and unease at the lack of consideration for the need for representatives with expertise in the complementary medicines field.

“Complementary medicines are a key component of the TGA’s work and therefore, as we have been recommending from the outset, the Council must include a representative with knowledge in this area, she emphasised.

We urge the Government to reconsider this oversight and hope to see complementary medicines, and the 75% of consumers using these products, given the recognition they deserve,” she concluded.

The complementary medicines industry prioritises reforms that will enable the continued availability of improved, pro-active, preventative health options for consumers. As such, the CHC will continue to engage with the TGA and the Parliamentary Secretary to ensure the best outcomes for both Industry and consumers.

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¹ The Complementary Medicines Industry response to the recommendations of the ‘TGA Reforms – A Blue Print for TGA’s Future’ (the Blueprint Report) accessed here:

<http://www.chc.org.au/Resources/Documents/Consultation%20documents/Blueprint%20Report-Correlation%20of%20recommendations%20and%20CHC%20response%20April%202012.pdf>