

## Media Release

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### CHC Calls for Change in Health Focus

The Complementary Healthcare Council of Australia (CHC), in its 2014-15 pre-Budget Submission, has called for a change in health focus from supporting an ailing and expensive illness model to a wellness model that empowers Australians to take a new approach to healthcare; an approach that promotes well-being.

“Current health policy in Australia is still focused on the treatment of people after they become unwell, resulting in vast social and economic costs associated with chronic disease. This is costly in monetary terms and in terms of the impact on productivity and quality of life,” said Mr Carl Gibson, Chief Executive Officer of the CHC.

“There is a growing body of scientific knowledge around the efficacy of complementary medicines, and recent economic analyses suggest that several of the more well-known complementary medicines can provide large potential cost savings across several chronic conditions.”<sup>1</sup>

For example, an Access Economics report, ‘*Cost effectiveness of complementary medicines*’ commissioned by the National Institute of Complementary Medicine in 2009, found that the use of St John’s wort – which has been found to be similarly effective as taking a standard anti-depressant for mild to moderate depression – could provide costs savings to the Australian health budget. Across the 56% of Australians with mild to moderate depression that are taking medication, a saving of over \$50 million would be possible.<sup>2</sup>

“The use and further development of complementary medicines provides an opportunity to counteract spiralling health care costs through more effective disease prevention and preventable chronic disease management, and potentially less reliance on the hospital system and the PBS.”

Mr Gibson went on to say, “cooperation and collaboration between policy makers, industry, health professionals and researchers is vital to ensuring that complementary medicines fulfil their potential of contributing to the overall health of all Australians.”

The CHC 2014/15 pre-Budget submission can be found [here](#).

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<sup>1</sup> WHO Traditional Medicine Strategy 2002-2005, Geneva, 2002, p. 2, available from <http://www.who.int/medicines/publications/traditionalpolicy/en/>

<sup>2</sup> Access Economics Pty Ltd, Report for The National Institute of Complementary Medicine, Cost effectiveness of complementary medicines, 2010, piii.

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