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CHC Welcomes Long-term Investment in Medical Research

Mr Carl Gibson, Chief Executive Officer of the Complementary Healthcare Council (CHC) welcomes the Federal Government's commitment to medical research in the 2014-15 Budget and urges the Government to recognise the growing contribution of complementary medicines by directing ten per cent of medical funding to complementary medicines research.

"It is encouraging to see that the Government has recognised the importance of long term support for medical research to help reduce the burden of disease on our communities, but it is also vital for the health of all Australians that high quality research is undertaken into the safety, efficacy and cost-effectiveness of complementary medicines."

Many complementary medicines are prescribed or recommended by General Practitioners and more than 40% of users take complementary medicines for chronic medical conditions, where current treatments may be expensive, ineffective or have unwanted side effects.¹

"Despite statistics showing that complementary medicines make up- approximately 12.5% of the total medicines and medical devices industry, less than one per cent of National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) funding supported complementary medicine research this previous year."

"Over the last twenty years, there has been a growing body of scientific knowledge on the efficacy of complementary medicines and a growing number of economic analyses that highlight the cost effectiveness of complementary medicines, especially in the prevention and management of chronic disease."

"Additional funding support is vital for the industry to show how it can assist in the move towards a more cost-effective Australian healthcare system. There is a need for further cooperation and collaboration between policy makers, researchers, industry, and health professionals to ensure complementary medicines are a future component of policy contributing to the overall health of all Australians," said Mr Gibson.

Australia has an important resource in its academic and research bodies, with the potential to be an international leader in complementary medicine research. We have formidable complementary medicine research leaders that hold a national and international reputation.

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¹ Complementary Medicine: 3 Vital Investment Priorities, National Institute of Complementary Medicine, 2013

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