



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

14 JUNE 2016

### **COMPLEMENTARY MEDICINES AUSTRALIA ISSUES HEALTH WARNING: CUTTING HEALTH REBATES WILL BE BAD FOR HEALTH**

Complementary Medicines Australia has issued a health policy warning to the Labor Party over plans to cut the rebate to natural therapies if Labor are elected as Government.

Shadow Treasurer Chris Bowen announced a raft of cuts last Friday (10 June 2016) with Labor Leader Bill Shorten reiterating the cuts to Natural Therapies on ABC Q& A this week.

Carl Gibson, Chief Executive of CMA, said; "Labor's plans are nothing more than a false economy. It's an accepted principle that for every \$1 invested in preventive health today Australia will save \$10 on chronic diseases in the future."

"Preventive health is an essential move towards improving the cost-effectiveness of the Australian healthcare system and crucial in taking pressure off over-stretched hospitals. Cutting the preventive healthcare rebate would not save money in the long run but would instead be detrimental to the government's health budget."

"As noted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, people who had visited a natural therapist were more likely to have healthier behaviours, including eating the recommended minimum serves of fruit and vegetables, exercising more and not smoking. Natural products and therapies contribute to the maintenance of a healthier lifestyle and better quality of life."<sup>i</sup>

"The burden of disease in Australia, and the associated economic costs, is a progressively top-of-mind issue, and the relatively small \$40million a year investment to the rebate for natural therapies is a small price to pay for the long term health of Australians, out of a total spend of more than \$105 billion"

**ENDS**

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4102.0Chapter5202008>