

## Media Release

29 July 2016

### **Australia needs People Centred Healthcare –Community Pharmacy Plays a Vital Role**

Mr Carl Gibson, chief executive officer of CMA, has responded to a controversial query raised in the *Review of Pharmacy Remuneration and Regulation Discussion Paper*, regarding the availability of complementary medicines on pharmacy shelves versus pharmacies being forced to focus on providing conventional medical treatments.

“A very large proportion of the Australian population, approximately 70 per cent, take complementary medicines, mostly alongside conventional medical treatments, to help improve health and wellbeing, and with about half of this use being in relation to the management of major chronic diseases.

“As noted by Health Minister Sussan Ley: ‘The reality is more and more people are turning to their pharmacist not just for prescriptions, but services like wound management and advice on how they can incorporate complementary medicines into their overall treatment regimes.’” he said.

“Increasingly, individuals have been seen to take a more proactive approach to healthcare, becoming more confident in self-selection and willing to take preventive measures to support their health. Data from 2015 indicates that Australian consumers still prefer to purchase their complementary medicines from pharmacies due to a large offering of product range and the availability of professional advice from the supervising pharmacist or healthcare professional”.<sup>1</sup>

“It is important that consumers can purchase their complementary medicines from a pharmacy where they can obtain advice from the pharmacist and in-store health professionals,” said Mr Gibson.

“Detractors such as fringe group Friends of Science in Medicine (FoSM) attempt to condemn complementary medicines by claiming a lack of evidence. However, many complementary medicines do have a strong basis in evidence, while the Australian Medical Association (AMA) acknowledges that some conventional treatments have a low level of evidence.<sup>2</sup> The fact is that all health disciplines need to continue to increase their evidence base,” said Mr Gibson.

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<sup>1</sup> Roy Morgan Research, 2015. *Checking the Health of Australia's Vitamin Market*, Melbourne: Roy Morgan Research.

<sup>2</sup> AMA Position Statement

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“The World Health Organisation *Traditional Medicine Strategy 2014-2023* highlights the potential contribution that complementary medicines can make to people-centred healthcare through the appropriate integration of complementary medicines into the healthcare system. The growing consumer demand for products and services that fall outside of orthodox prescription medicines should not be ignored or denigrated; rather consumer empowerment and people-centred health care should be vital elements of health in Australia,” Mr Gibson went on to say.

**ENDS**

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