

CMA Media Release

29 October 2018

CMA Welcomes Operation Targeting Imports of Fake and Illegal Medicines

Complementary Medicines Australia (CMA) has welcomed news of the recently conducted Operation Pangea, an annually-occurring international initiative to tackle counterfeit and illegal medicines purchased over the internet. Earlier this month, Australia's medicines regulator, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), teamed up with the Australian Border Force (ABF) to detect and stop the importation of counterfeit and illegal therapeutic goods.

CMA chief executive, Mr Carl Gibson, said, "Few overseas jurisdictions have regulations for complementary medicines that are as stringent and robust as those in Australia. This means that products purchased online from overseas are not subject to the same high level of scrutiny. A product purchased online from overseas may not contain what it says it does on the label, may contain the wrong ingredient, or even be intentionally tainted with undeclared pharmaceutical drugs. With 90 consignments seized in mail facilities across Australia, Operation Pangea serves as a reminder that consumers must be very careful when making purchases online."

"In contrast, the Australian complementary medicines industry is regulated under one of the most robust safety and quality frameworks in the world, where manufacturers are licensed and inspected by the TGA and must follow the highest standards of manufacture."

"Apart from the very few types of products that are specifically exempt, all complementary medicines supplied in Australia are required to be entered onto the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (ARTG), which is maintained by the TGA. Unless they are included on the ARTG, complementary medicines cannot legally be imported, exported, manufactured, or supplied to consumers. All medicines, including complementary medicines, entered on the ARTG have a number displayed on the pack (AUST L or AUST R)."

"This ensures that consumers have access to responsible, evidence-based and high quality products, and the ability to make informed choices about including them within their health care options."

"Consumers should be very wary about making purchases online, and only do so on the recommendation of a qualified healthcare professional or from a known and reputable source," concluded Mr Gibson.

Refer reliable information to (referral can be anonymous) www.tga.gov.au;
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