



# Australian Natural Therapists Association Ltd.

*ANTA – It's Your Choice, Naturally*

ABN 68 000 161 142

11 July, 2013

## Media Release

### **Response to article published in the Hobart Mercury and Adelaide Advertiser on 6/7/13**

Australians are exercising their free will and personal choice to utilise natural therapies as a course of action, when appropriate, to maintain good health care and balance in their lives. The former Australian Government provided access to a wider range of health care strategies to the Australian community and alleviated the burden on the burgeoning mainstream health care system in this country. This was enacted via a 30% subsidy on all private health insurance rebates to assist people from our community to access natural and traditional medicine services for their families. Individuals and families choose to engage in the use of natural medicine services with or without a rebate by subscribing to Private Health Insurance cover through many insurance companies including but not limited to Medibank Private. Users also choose to select to participate in the 30% Tax Rebate system if it applies to their level of income; no force is being applied to anyone!

The Australian Government has commissioned a review of all natural therapy services attracting private health fund rebates through the office of the Department of Health and Ageing. The Australian Government's Chief Medical Officer, Professor Chris Baggoley is chairing the Natural Therapies Review Assessment Committee (NTRAC) that consists of stakeholders from private health insurance providers, restricted health insurance providers, medical practitioners and academics and professional association representatives from the practitioner associations in the field of natural and traditional medicine practice. The NTRAC includes staff and researchers from the National Health Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and the secretariat of the Department of Health and Ageing. The latter staff are responsible for reviewing the evidenced based research provided by the professional associations and other stakeholders associated with the natural and traditional medicine professions.

The outcome of the review is due for release following the conclusion of the review period in September 2013. The NHMRC will provide its findings to confirm the suitability of those therapies that are shown to meet the criteria and standard for evidence-based practice prescribed by the NHMRC. Taxpayers get involved to drive their tax dollar further and health insurers packaged the bundles of natural therapy services and offered them to the Australian public on a commercial basis. Individuals and families choose a bundle of services including optical, dental, physiotherapy, natural therapies etc based on their healthcare needs.

The Australian public is better informed about health services than ever in the past and is choosing services based on need. Numeracy and literacy within the community is higher than ever before and people are informing themselves of available services and their benefits through personal research and participation based on positive health related

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outcomes. As a result of this phenomena the most likely demographic to utilise natural medicine services are well educated people who have completed a higher education award and have a higher appreciation of self-management over their personal health.

Natural and Traditional medicine practitioners complete rigorous training programs and graduate with bona fide credentials that mean something about their professional standing to other law abiding citizens in Australia. Various Australian Governments agencies and departments such as the Australian Tax Office, the Department of Health and Ageing, Australian Health Practitioners Registration Agency, Australian Securities and Investment Commission, Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency, Australian Skills Quality Authority, Therapeutic Goods Authority, Private Health Insurance Council of Australia etc all have regulatory authority over the education, training and delivery of authentic natural and traditional health services in Australia.

Notwithstanding the unsubstantiated claims made by members of the Australian Medical Association and the Friends of Science in Medicine (Sceptics Society), it is incredible that ALL of the above agencies would acquiesce to anyone practicing illegal, unproven therapies and could be allowed to continue within the Australian community? It seems that evidence-based practice does not extend to the press articles these two groups subscribe to.

Australian Natural Therapists Association  
10<sup>th</sup> July 2013

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