

Dear [*Your Local MP*],

My name is [*Your Name*], and I am a constituent of your electorate and one of the 70 per cent of Australians who use complementary medicine and/or believe a person has a right to choose their system of healthcare.

I am also a voter and taxpayer.

I am writing to voice my concern that in Australia, my right to access natural therapies and products, and my right to accurate information, is being restricted. Why?

For decades, millions of Australians have benefitted from access to a wide range of therapies, including complementary medicine, to maintain good health.

But increasingly, biased, anti-complementary medicine vested interests are influencing the Government to:

- Stop universities teaching complementary therapy courses
- Conduct biased and flawed reviews that mislead the public
- Have private health insurance rebates for complementary medicine abolished
- Deny the existence of good quality, scientific evidence showing the health and cost benefits of complementary medicine healthcare option
- Have homoeopathic and other products banned from sale in pharmacies
- Introduce drastic TGA regulatory policy change to remove complementary medicines from therapeutic goods legislation, compromising public safety

Whose interests does this serve? Not the public, nor the GPs and other medical professionals who support complementary medicine.

As a taxpayer, I trust politicians and taxpayer funded institutions, such as the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), to impartially and ethically inform me of the evidence underpinning the therapies of my choice.

Yet, research that consistently demonstrates health and economic benefits from complementary medicine and therapies is ignored, most recently in NHMRC reviews .

For example, one million Australians use homoeopathy but high quality, clinical research studies showing the safety and effectiveness of homoeopathy were ignored by the NHMRC in its 2015 Review, which misleadingly stated “homoeopathy should not be used” and “may put peoples’ health at risk”.

The Review, which is now the subject of a Commonwealth Ombudsman complaint for maladministration and scientific misconduct, is being held up as “evidence” to support yet another attempt at restricting customer choice, this time with recommendations to ban homoeopathic medicines from being sold in pharmacies.

The fact is Freedom of Information documents show:

- The NHMRC engineered the outcome of the homeopathy review by reinventing the research protocol to dismiss the results of 97 per cent of studies from the findings.
- The NHMRC ignored and hid advice from its own experts who disagreed with the Review’s findings and methods.
- The NHMRC conducted the Review twice – FOI documents shows the first “missing” taxpayer-funded review was of good quality, but the public has never seen it.

Beyond homoeopathy, 16 other complementary and natural therapies were also reviewed by the NHMRC as part of the Review of the Australian Government Rebate on Private Health Insurance for Natural Therapies. Each review was similarly flawed and produced findings that there was 'no conclusive evidence'.

The Private Health Insurance Rebate reviews did not even assess "cost effectiveness" and "safety".

As a taxpayer, I want my taxes to fund complementary medicine research that is of the highest standard of ethical conduct. Research I can trust; research that accurately informs me of all of the evidence about complementary healthcare options, irrespective of whether special interest groups consider them to be "controversial".

It's my health and my choice.

I am asking you to stand up for research integrity and ethical public administration. Support:

1. A Senate Inquiry into bias against complementary medicine.

Specifically, the "scientifically and administratively flawed" NHMRC Review of homoeopathy (March 2015) and reviews of 16 other natural therapies as part of the Australian Government Rebate on Private Health Insurance for Natural Therapies Review (November 2015).

2. Publicly release the "missing" NHMRC review and its findings - 'A Systematic Review of the Evidence on the Effectiveness of Homeopathy' (Final Draft Report, August 2012).
3. Protect consumer access to the private health insurance rebates for natural therapies.
4. End bias and conflicts of interest in the Federal Health bureaucracy that seek to restrict consumer access to accurate information, complementary medicine, education, services and products.
5. Develop proactive policies to strengthen the role complementary medicine plays in contributing to community health, as per Australia obligations under the 'World Health Organisation Traditional Medicine Strategy 2014–2023'

I support this Your Health, Your Choice campaign to protect the public's rights because I have seen how regulatory changes, reviews and recommendations are restricting our rights of equitable access to complementary therapy healthcare choices and information.

Please reply to this email outlining your position on this important issue.

You can read more about Your Health, Your Choice at:

<http://yourhealthyourchoice.com.au/>

Thank you in advance.

[Your Name],