



Media statement:  
15 June 2016

## **ATMS concerned by proposed cuts to preventative health care**

The Australian Traditional-Medicine Society (ATMS), Australia's largest national association representing professional practitioners of natural medicine, has expressed concern over the Australian Labor Party's (ALP) proposed cuts to health insurance premium rebates for natural therapies (Labor scraps natural therapy rebates, AAP, Friday 10 June 2016).

Chief Executive Officer, ATMS, Charles Wurf says in the public's best interests, natural medicine treatments should be considered as part of a holistic national health policy, rather than a budget cut.

"Figures demonstrate that interest in natural medicine is growing both here in Australia and around the world, with 2 out of 3 Australians having used complementary and natural medicines.<sup>1</sup> The proposal disregards the voice of these consumers in how they choose to manage their health and wellbeing," says Mr Wurf.

Due to its focus on preventive medicine, another benefit of natural medicine is that in the long term individuals may save money on hospital and medical costs.<sup>2 3 4 5</sup>

"We strongly believe it is a false economy to cut this critical national health funding. Rather than opting for more expensive medical procedures up front, planned wellness strategies, including changes to diet and lifestyle, can potentially save individuals and the healthcare system on hospital and medical costs in the long run.

"Furthermore, natural medicine practitioners are a valuable contributor to the economy, making up 25,000 small businesses across Australia and providing an annual contribution to the economy of \$4.2bn<sup>1</sup> – that's a figure that can't be ignored and will suffer under Labor's proposed policy," says Mr Wurf.

ATMS reiterates its concern that the proposed cuts to health insurance premium rebates for natural therapies are not in the best interest of the public's health and wellbeing and will not yield long term cost saving. This policy also does not take into consideration the current positive economic impact of this industry – both in alleviating the conventional healthcare burden and regarding the significant economic contribution of 25,000 small businesses.

For more information on natural medicine, please visit:  
[www.naturalmedicineweek.com.au/government-and-media/](http://www.naturalmedicineweek.com.au/government-and-media/)

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## Notes to editors:

### About the Australian Traditional-Medicine Society:

The Australian Traditional-Medicine Society (ATMS) is the leader of the natural medicine industry, promoting and representing professional practitioners of natural medicine, who are encouraged to pursue the highest ideals of professionalism in their natural medicine practice and education. As Australia's largest national professional association for natural medicine practitioners, ATMS is a multi-disciplinary association representing approximately 11,000 accredited practitioners throughout Australia. ATMS was founded in 1984 and is an incorporated not-for-profit company. In 2014 ATMS celebrated their 30th anniversary representing natural medicine practitioners in Australia. ATMS is governed by a Board of Directors with specialised departments for Massage Therapy, Traditional Chinese Medicine, Homeopathy, Nutrition, Naturopathy and Herbal Medicine.

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<http://atms.com.au>

### References:

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