

To All Who Care About the Future of Homœopathy in Australia

The issue:

In March 2015 Australia's National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) released a report that concluded 'there is no reliable evidence that homœopathy is effective in treating health conditions.' It has received widespread media coverage to falsely claim 'there is no evidence that homœopathy works.'

The impact of a review by a respected institution such as NHMRC cannot be overstated: the general public, health practitioners, decision-makers and other researchers all rely on those findings. Therefore, it is important that the work was conducted fairly and ethically.

The problem:

The NHMRC report is being cited as credible evidence and used by anti-homœopathy sceptics (such as Friends of Science in Medicine) to lobby government to erode Australians' right of choice to access homœopathic practitioner services, products and education. This pressure is real and ongoing.

The former NHMRC CEO who initiated the Review and signed it off declared in 2015 that CAM practitioners are "charlatans" and "snake oil merchants wanting to take your money." In February 2016, the Homeopathy Working Committee Chair slandered homœopathy¹ as "a therapeutic dead end."

What's being done:

The Australian Homœopathic Association (AHA) has been formally investigating the NHMRC Review and uncovered significant bias, conflicts of interest, procedural irregularities and methodological flaws and is on the verge of submitting a formal complaint to the Commonwealth Ombudsman, after an exhaustive investigation in collaboration with industry friends and research experts.

Some examples of what NHMRC does not want the Australian community to know:

- NHMRC terminated a first review in 2012, then started again, without disclosing its existence or findings.
- NHMRC excluded any homœopathic subject or research experts from its overview committee.
- The NHMRC's Homeopathy Working Committee was first chaired by a member of Australia's leading anti-homœopathy lobby group, Friends of Science in Medicine. Despite the obvious conflict of interest NHMRC retained him as a committee member.
- After 'finalising' its research protocol in 2012, NHMRC continued to modify it until a framework was retrospectively developed that enabled the conclusion 'no reliable evidence' across all reviewed conditions.
- The 176 papers considered represented less than 10% of the evidence NHMRC reported it assessed and no original papers were retrieved; the findings of 171 out of those 176 studies were not assessed at all.
- NHMRC did not publically disclose important feedback received from its 2013 independent external methodological reviewer (the Australasian Cochrane Centre), who disagreed with the definitive nature of NHMRC's findings, noting that "a substantial proportion of small (but good quality) studies show significant differences." NHMRC ignored the advice and concealed it from public knowledge.

Fair-minded citizens are asked whether this constitutes impartial and ethical conduct by Australia's leading medical expert body.

Opportunity - safeguard the future:

Homœopathy is under threat, but this situation represents a golden opportunity to turn an apparent negative into a major positive and safeguard the future of homœopathy, as well as the community's right of choice in healthcare. If the report is overturned, it will prevent the ability of sceptics and other vested interests from influencing government processes in this way again.

¹ <http://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2016/02/16/paul-glasziou-still-no-evidence-for-homeopathy/>

What's needed - how you can help:

A detailed submission is being prepared to have the NHMRC Report formally investigated by the Commonwealth Ombudsman for bias, conflicts of interest, procedural irregularities and methodology that did not conform to standardised, accepted scientific methods - with the ultimate aim to have the report set aside.

To date, this has involved considerable time and resources but needs further support to ensure it succeeds. The effectiveness and quality of the effort depends upon the resources that go into it.

Where will the money go ...

- Supporting the Australian homœopathic profession for:
- Administrative and legal costs to support the official complaint to the Commonwealth Ombudsman and other current actions
- Future actions to support the campaign and ongoing protection of Australians' right of choice in healthcare
- Providing *accurate* information about homœopathy and its research base to the Australian community

How to donate:

1. Sponsor via the AHA website:

The AHA continues to appreciate contributions to the AHA homœopathy campaign fund to support this ongoing process (via www.homeopathyoz.org - click on **Sponsor via PayPal at this link**).

2. Every little helps! Make a small monthly contribution.

You can make a small monthly contribution by downloading a form from www.homeopathyoz.org (click on 'Make small on-going contributions'), printing it, filling it out and sending it either as an email attachment to admin@homeopathyoz.org or via post to **AHA National Office, PO Box 7108, Toowoomba South, Qld 4350**. Contributions as small as \$5 a month are very welcome. AHA members will receive receipts and can offset these contributions as sponsorship against their annual business tax return.

Alternatively, you can set up a monthly bank-to-bank transfer of \$5 or more from your bank account to this account: **BSB: 034-221, Account No. 644032, Reference "Hom. Campaign"**.

3. How can sympathisers who are not AHA members help?

If you know of any non-member sympathisers who would like to contribute but still tax-offset their contribution, The Aurum Project has kindly made itself available for the purpose, as it has charitable status. Any member of the public can donate to the *Homœopathy Campaign Fund* at this link: www.givenow.com.au/aurumproject with the reference "Hom. Campaign Fund" in the message box on the donation page.

Donations are:

- ✓ Tax deductible
- ✓ An investment in the future of homœopathy in Australia.
- ✓ Safeguarding the future of non-medical homœopaths' right to practice in Australia.
- ✓ An investment in protecting Natural Medicine in Australia, as homœopathy is one of many natural therapies being attacked by vested interests
- ✓ An investment in protecting citizens' right of choice for their healthcare.

With enough support, the homœopathic profession can utilise all avenues needed to secure a positive outcome for the future of homœopathy in Australia.

