

NZ Health Trust

**Media Statement
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Decision to abandon ANZTPA welcomed by NZ Health Trust

Natural and Traditional Healthcare industry and consumers welcome news that the joint agency for regulating medicines and medical devices (ANZTPA) has been abandoned. This millstone has been hanging around the industry's neck since 1998 and its demise is a welcome relief said NZ Health Trust Chairman Dave Sloan. Mr Sloan says it vindicates users' and producers' unwavering opposition to ANZTPA.

"Ditching ANZTPA is great news for New Zealanders and gives the government the green light to at the same time ditch the deeply flawed Natural Health and Supplementary Products Bill (currently due for its third reading in Parliament). Few will grieve over this other than those who've wanted to limit freedom to choose anything but the products of big pharma, or big manufacturers of natural products.

"When the NZ and Australian governments agreed to implement ANZTPA in June 2011 they also agreed to carve out natural and traditional health products from that agreement.

"The Bill was predetermined by the terms of that 2011 agreement. Now that ANZTPA has fallen over, the justification for the Bill in its current form no longer applies. We hope that it was at least partly acceptance in New Zealand of the Australian PM's expressed opinion that the Aussie regulations were too expensive for too little proven benefit.

"The Bill would have damaged the natural and traditional health products sector. Several reputable economic impact assessments showed that the Bill could decimate small and innovative New Zealand companies with compliance costs and prohibition of many ingredients people have used safely for generations.

"Now the government should develop regulation to get the best out of our natural and traditional health product producers. With approximately \$1 billion in sales, they have an enviable safety record and huge opportunities for helping a healthy New Zealand population.

"Natural and traditional health products should be regulated separately from foods and medicines as a unique category, but with regulation that starts with the food standards, rather than the standards developed for big pharma. Economic impact assessments show that only limited regulation is required. Subject to proper manufacturing standards, these products should be permitted and assumed to be safe unless shown otherwise, and be permitted to make evidence-based explanations of therapeutic benefits people expect.

"The Ministry of Health in its recent Briefing to the Incoming Minister of Health, Jonathan Coleman, stated that it wants to strengthen the focus on "wellness, prevention and early intervention".

"Natural and traditional health products should be part of that focus. Giving consumers a full range of choice of natural and traditional health products encourages and empowers them to take control of their own wellness and illness prevention. As an unsubsidised sector it poses no drain on the public purse because it is based on consumers making their own choices just as they do with foods.

“Ordinary consumer law protects consumers against unsubstantiated claims, and it can apply to natural and traditional health products.

“A regulatory regime which enables a competitive and thriving natural and traditional health product sector has significant potential to save future public health dollars. It’s a no-brainer really,” said Mr Sloan.

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