

Media release
For Immediate Release
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Shameless waste of money won't buy support for the TGA

Pouring taxpayer money into sham consultations, hiring staff and appointing people to cushy advisory committees won't buy Government political support for the proposed Joint Therapeutic Goods Agency.

Natural health watchdog the NZ Health Trust was responding to yesterday's announcement by the New Zealand and Australian Governments of a joint committee to oversee standards for the Australian-dominated regulation of the natural health product sector.

NZ Health Trust spokesperson Amy Adams called for the shameless waste of taxpayer funds to cease, as it is not likely that the joint agency will go ahead.

"Every member of the Health Select Committee which examined the proposal in great detail opposes its introduction," Ms Adams said.

"These MP's aren't fooled by officials acting as though it's going ahead - because everyone knows Labour doesn't have the numbers to pass the legislation."

The Trust, which represents thousands of consumers and natural health companies, said it has asked Health officials for details of spending on preparations for the ill-fated Joint Agency, but it would be in the region of several millions of dollars to date.

"It is a disgrace that money from our stretched health budget is being wasted on sham consultations with 'friendly' organisations and holding endless meetings up and down the country trying to sell the joint agency proposal," Ms Adams said.

"Its clear there is huge opposition to the proposal - we believe that the 2.5 million New Zealanders* who use natural health products do not want the consequences of adopting the Australian system.

ENDS

** Independent research conducted in March 2005 shows 62% of New Zealanders say they use natural health products or dietary supplements.*

For further information please contact
Amy Adams
(021) 499-066