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2 March 2011

## MEDIA STATEMENT

### **Medicines knowledge and label directions vital for well-informed consumers**

The Australian Self-Medication Industry (ASMI) today supported a call for improved consumer awareness regarding many common over-the-counter (OTC) medicines.

The NPS, as part of its MedicineWise program, released survey findings showing some confusion among consumers regarding the active ingredient in certain OTC, pain relief medicines.

ASMI Regulatory and Scientific Affairs Director, Steven Scarff, said that knowledge of active ingredients, correct usage, and possible side effects were all vital elements in improving the quality use of medicines in the community.

“In many respects, the level of health literacy falls short of what it should be in a highly developed economy, and there is a responsibility on all parties to do more to improve knowledge and understanding of medicines.

“We fully support the NPS MedicineWise campaign as a valuable element in what should be an ongoing, multi-faceted effort to promote the safe and effective use of medicines, and in turn, improved self care among all Australians.”

Mr Scarff said it was extremely important to emphasise the need to read and understand medicine labels carefully, and to follow all instructions. Sometimes different brands may contain the same ingredients. Therefore, it is important for consumers to always read the label and to follow instructions to ensure they are not taking a double dose.

“The dosage instructions on the labels of OTC pain relievers, such as paracetamol, ibuprofen and aspirin, have been reviewed by the TGA. Consumers can be reassured that those doses are safe and effective,” Mr Scarff said.

ASMI is currently developing an educational website for consumers that will include information on how to read a medicine label.

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About ASMI: The Australian Self-Medication Industry (ASMI) is the peak industry body for the Australian self care industry representing consumer healthcare products including over-the-counter medicines and complementary medicines. ASMI’s mission is to promote better health through responsible self-care. This means ensuring that safe and effective self-care products are readily available to all Australians at a reasonable cost. ASMI works to encourage responsible use by consumers and an increasing role for cost-effective self-medication products as part of the broad national health strategy. [www.asmi.com.au](http://www.asmi.com.au)

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