

MEDIA STATEMENT

Future of healthcare regulation in Australia should not be derailed by Trans Tasman differences

The Australian Self-Medication Industry (ASMI), the industry body representing the \$3 billion non-prescription consumer healthcare sector today called on the Federal Government to examine constructive ways to streamline the Australian regulation of therapeutic products including complementary medicines.

The New Zealand Government has announced that it would not be proceeding with legislation designed to enable the establishment of a joint agency with Australia for the regulation of therapeutic products.

“The decision by New Zealand to pull out of the joint agency should not jeopardise Australia’s ability to move further toward a world class regulatory regime,” the Executive Director of the ASMI, Juliet Seifert, said.

“There has been considerable time, funds and effort invested by industry and government in developing the key elements of a new scheme that would not only harmonise laws across the Tasman, but also bring a more contemporary approach to regulation in each country.

“There is a need to bring regulation of the non-prescription sector into the 21st Century to reflect social and demographic changes of an ageing population and a new focus on preventative and innovative remedies. All these changes are reflected in the increasing importance to all of the internet and related technologies. Medicines regulation must be in tune with this reality.

“It would be a tragic waste of effort if the work undertaken on the Australian side were discarded because of an ill-conceived political and lobbying campaign in New Zealand.

“We therefore welcome the statement by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health & Ageing, Senator Brett Mason, indicating that the work done so far will not be lost and that discussions may resume in the future. ASMI will be keen to take part in any such discussions.

“However, we believe that the pace of reform to medicines regulation in Australia must not be slowed and that it can no longer be dictated by political events in New Zealand.

“The quality, safety and efficacy of medicines is paramount and it is important that we consider ways to better manage regulations affecting areas such as the licensing, packaging and advertising of OTC products.

“A modern risk/benefit approach would enable many more Australians to adopt a self-care or preventative approach to managing their health with improved health outcomes and a reduced burden on national health budgets,” Ms Seifert said.

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

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