

14 August 2017

The Honourable Roger Cook MLA  
Deputy Premier  
Minister for Health; Mental Health  
13<sup>th</sup> Floor, Dumas House  
2 Havelock St  
West Perth WA 6005

Email: [Minister.Cook@dpc.wa.gov.au](mailto:Minister.Cook@dpc.wa.gov.au)

Dear Deputy Premier,

### **State support for the rescheduling of codeine products**

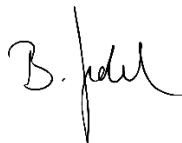
We are writing to request your support for a nationally consistent approach to medicines scheduling regulations following the Therapeutic Goods Administration's (TGA) decision to reschedule codeine to a Schedule 4 drug, preventing over the counter (OTC) sales of products containing codeine by pharmacies from 1 February 2018.

Under the Western Australia Medicines & Poisons Regulations, your jurisdiction can decide to vary TGA scheduling decisions and provide exemptions. Whilst the RACGP respects this remit, the rescheduling of codeine is a necessary step to improve patient safety and reduce harm, with current evidence showing that up to 150 Australians are now dying from codeine-related overdoses each year. The only effective way to reduce the dependence and harm these OTC products cause to our patients, their families and communities is to ensure the scheduling decision of the TGA is implemented without exception across all jurisdictions.

In addition, the work of the Nationally Coordinated Codeine Implementation Working Group (NCCIWG) must be fully supported by all stakeholders, including State health departments, to ensure the effective and consistent implementation of the rescheduling of codeine to a Schedule 4 drug, and assist in the provision of support and information for consumers.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact me or Mr Stephan Groombridge on (03) 8699 0544 or via [stephan.groombridge@racgp.org.au](mailto:stephan.groombridge@racgp.org.au).

Yours sincerely



Dr Bastian Seidel  
President



Dr Tim Koh  
Chair, RACGP Western Australia

cc: The Hon Greg Hunt MP, Minister for Health