

Plants and natural plant products have been researched and tested scientifically far more than compound pharmaceuticals for many thousands of years. The adverse effects of most of these items is well understood, simply through trial and error of human civilisation for millennia, making the use of these products them some of the most tested products on the planet. In many circumstances, the testing runs into the many millions of doses. There are vast data depositories for these low risk products.

By restricting information and use, more harm will occur from overregulation than from information provided. The biggest problem is who decides what is scientific or not. By restricting the information on natural products that have been used for milenia, will harm human health in the following ways;

1) Governments are already too involved in our lives, and the restrictions will simply hurt the dissemination of information.

a) I agree with the proposition that Products that might best be regulated under other regulatory frameworks, without undermining public health and safety, are removed from the auspices of the Act; and consider that a common sense approach.

b) The Panel recommendation that the Australian Government undertake a review of the range of products currently classified as Class I medical devices, with a view to reclassifying products as consumer goods in circumstances where the product poses little or no risk to consumers should it not perform as specified or malfunctions, should be accepted.

c) I agree that the Australian Government should undertake a review of the range of complementary medicinal products, currently listed in the ARTG and subject to regulation under the medicines framework, with a view to ensuring that products that might best be regulated under other regulatory frameworks, without undermining public health and safety, are removed from the auspices of the Act. Low risk items being removed would benefit Australian industry, allowing Australia to better compete with non-regulated low risk products coming in from overseas. Australia often produces these products to a higher standard, due to our better business practices.

2) Governments are already too large, too controlling, and most importantly not resourced enough to be adding more regulations that are restrictive. By removing items from regulation, it will not have adverse effects, as it was clearly shown that the consumer laws are already adequate to protect eh consumer. Australian consumer laws are some of the best in the world when enforced.

3) Every piece of fruit and vegetable, has compounds that have benefits and negatives for some people. Low risk. People are smart enough to cut through the clutter to find the right information. Reducing regulation is a positive.

4) Claims for medical cures need to be scientific, but for simple minimal risk items as preventatives or minor remedies that have become part of our culture, it is dangerous for governments to restrict information. Eg; Lemon and honey are simply remedies for many problems, and sooth far better than so called scientifically research products. Science can be based on statistics, and if something that is so widely used and shown by so many to be beneficial, is proven science based on sheer volume of use. Science can be manipulated, and can be proven wrong later. How many large pharmaceutical companies have proven to governments the product is safe, only to find out 20 years after use, it causes cancer. Surely, millions of people using an item for thousands of years, is far better proof than a 2-year well-funded scientific study.

5) Australia does not control the internet, and I for one would prefer freedom of speech so I hope that does not change. By placing restrictions on local content and claims, all it will do is increase the

amount of product coming in from overseas. Conversely, by reducing regulation Australian industry will benefit.

6) Many low risk products are used for emotional conditions, whereby science is not the best indicator of functionality, rather people's feelings are the indicator. How can feelings be scientifically proven? Peoples senses are often difficult to define, and science cannot prove our senses wrong, as it is a subjective topic rather than an objective one, and Governments have no business regulating subjective views on low risk items.

7) The government should be encouraged to use a broad definition of low risk items, particularly for items that have been used for human consumption for hundreds of years, or at least 3 decades. Harmful problems would have surfaced by that time.

8) Herbal complimentary medicines where they have been used traditionally for many decades, centuries, or millennia, should be included in low risk, particularly natural products or naturally made products that have stood the test of time.

9) Streamlining the regulatory framework for hard surface disinfectants makes sense. Where a product has been shown to work for a long time and has become standardised, the onus of scientific study should be exempt or minimal. If it is a new compound then the research should be more thorough, but not too onerous. Scientific papers already completed in the past should be able to be used as evidence, rather than having to complete it from scratch. Most disinfectant compounds have already been over studies, and more regulation for those items is not needed, provided the evidence is available already.

10) Option 3 of declaring essential oils as natural products should be the option as essential oils are a natural product and have do not need the amount of current regulation. This would be better applied to distilled essential oils rather than the ones extracted by chemicals. Some extraction processes would be considered low risk, but others could be considered moderate risk, especially some processes such as butane extraction.