

MEDIA RELEASE

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MANUFACTURERS CALL FOR A STOP TO MISINFORMATION ABOUT NATURAL HEALTH PRODUCTS BILL

A group of manufacturers say they are frustrated with the amount of misinformation circulating about the Natural Health Products Bill, which is resulting in consumers' and the wider sectors' interests being held to ransom by a small group of detractors.

The Bill will regulate natural health products sold and marketed directly to consumers, which will provide both New Zealanders and our export markets with a higher level of assurance that products are safe, approved, effective and contain what is stated on the label.

While the Bill is designed to provide greater consumer confidence it also recognises the integral role health care professionals play in this industry. As such it does not apply to products that are prescribed or directly made available through trained health practitioners or traditional medicine practitioners.

The Bill has been developed over many years as a much lighter New Zealand-only regulatory model than the previously-proposed ANZTPA (joint Australia New Zealand Therapeutic Products Act), in line with their low-risk nature, but is still awaiting its third reading. In fact New Zealand is the only first world country without a modern regulatory system for natural health and supplementary products.

Most of the Bill's detractors are fighting against it because they mistakenly believe that its regulations would prevent traditional and trained health practitioners from prescribing or making certain natural health products available.

[Vitaco](#) Chief Operating Officer Roger Scott, [Go Healthy](#) Director Kurt Renner, [New Zealand Health Manufacturing](#) Managing Director Minesh Patel, [Phytomed](#) Technical Director Phil Rasmussen and [Artemis](#) founder Sandra Clair say they are frustrated at the amount of misinformation being circulated about the Bill.

Speaking on behalf of the group, all of whom belong to the industry body Natural Products NZ (NPNZ), NPNZ's Corporate Affairs Director Alison Quesnel says: "The irony is that most of the Bill's detractors are not health product manufacturers or exporters. Many aren't even in the natural health product sector. We question why this group is holding such sway over the legislative process."

She comments that virtually every natural health product manufacturer she has spoken with – from very large companies to small ones – also support legislation because it will be good for business, good for consumers, good for the natural health industry, and therefore good for the economy.

"Ongoing delays to the Bill's passage are not serving any of us well and nor is it helping consumers or local manufacturers who only sell their products here and want to be able to talk more openly with their consumers about what their products can and will do for them."

For example, the current law prevents natural health product companies from making therapeutic claims about either traditional evidence or successfully clinically trialled products unless the product is licensed under the more expensive pharmaceutical medicine category. This is because New Zealand's outdated regulations do not define 'natural health product'.

The group is actively working with the Ministry of Health to achieve the best possible regulations that fulfill a duty of care to the public with respect to providing easy and economical access to plant medicines and supplements that are safe, effective and suitable for use while also supporting a legislative framework that improves access to overseas markets for NZ manufacturers and exporters.

A survey in 2014 showed that the natural products industry makes an estimated \$1.4 billion per annum contribution to New Zealand's economy (up from an estimated \$1 billion five years ago). Around 85% of natural health product companies export and this is the primary area of growth for the industry.

"Aligning our regulations to be more like those of our major overseas markets will make it easier to sell New Zealand-made products there and could potentially even provide automatic barrier-free access into some countries," says Ms Quesnel.

"This legislation can't come soon enough."

For accurate information about the Bill, visit: <http://www.naturalproducts.nz/natural-health-products-bill-faq/>

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Natural Products New Zealand (NPNZ) is a national industry organisation representing this country's natural products, functional foods, complementary medicines, cosmeceuticals and nutraceuticals industries within New Zealand and internationally.

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