



THE SOUTH AUSTRALIA

MASAGE THERAPISTS ASSOCIATION INC.

Inquiry into services and treatment options for persons with cancer

Terms of reference covered in this submission.

- (i) the extent to which less conventional and complementary treatments are researched, or are supported by research,
- (ii) the efficacy of common but less conventional approaches either as primary treatments or as adjuvant/complementary therapies, and
- (iii) the legitimate role of government in the field of less conventional cancer treatment.

This submission has been prepared by James Flaxman as a representative of the South Australian Massage Therapists Association Inc. (SAMTA). SAMTA incorporated in 1976, is a South Australian body representing professional Remedial Massage practitioners who have many years of training and experience in the massage industry, and is associated with the Federation of Natural and Traditional Therapists Ltd. SAMTA and its members believe that there is a legitimate role for Remedial Therapies as an adjuvant/complementary therapy in regards to treatment and management of cancer patients.

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The Federation of Natural and Traditional Therapists

The Federation of Natural and Traditional therapists Ltd (FNNT) is a peak body which represents professional associations and practitioners of complementary therapies.

The predecessor of the FNNT, the Natural Therapists Forum, held its first meeting in July 1991. This meeting was attended by representatives of the major complementary therapies professional associations in Australia and had been convened in response to a request by the Therapeutic Goods Administration for the development of a system for the identification of bonafide practitioners of complementary therapies for supply of therapeutic goods and devices. The Natural Therapists Forum successfully developed what is now known as the Schedule One listing and TGA exemption certificates for practitioners.

The Natural Therapists Forum was replaced by the Federation of Natural and Traditional Therapists which was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee with the Australian Securities Commission in April 1996. Since 1996 the FNNT has expanded its membership to include complementary therapies associations beyond those eligible for Schedule One listing, making the FNNT the representative body of a wide variety of natural and traditional therapies professionals in Australia.

In 1996 the FNNT developed a set of competency standards for natural therapies practitioners. These competency standards were the first of their kind in Australia. In 2000 the FNNT was represented on the National Industry Reference Group for the development of the complementary therapies section of the Health Training Package. The Health Training Package HLT02 now represents nationally consistent minimum education levels for complementary therapies practitioners in naturopathy, western herbal medicine, homoeopathy, ayurveda, remedial massage, TCM remedial massage, and shiatsu.

In 2002 the FNNT was one of five recipients of funding from the federal Department of Health and Aging for the project 'Establishment of a uniform National Registration System for suitably qualified practitioners in acupuncture, naturopathy and herbal medicine'. The FNNT was also granted a Private Ruling from the Australian Taxation Office which granted Goods and Services Tax Exemption to the practitioner members of the FNNT member associations.

The FNNT today represents a number of complementary therapies professional associations across all modalities. The philosophy of the FNNT is one of unification of the profession of natural and traditional therapies. To facilitate this philosophy a 'round table' approach is taken where every member association is granted an equal voice and equal rights. This approach has stood the test of time and the FNNT has now become one of the foremost representative bodies within complementary therapies in Australia.

Current member associations of the FNTT

AAA	Australasian Association of Ayurveda
AAOH	Australian Association of Homotoxicology
AAMA	Australian Aromatic Medicine Association
AANMP	Alumni Association of Natural Medicine Practitioners
ANACHA	Australian National Acupuncture & Chinese Herbalists Assoc.
ANPA	Australian Naturopathic Practitioners Association
BTFA	Bowen Therapists Federation of Australia
HATAA	Holistic Animal Therapists Association of Australia
IAAA	International Association of Ayurvedic Acupuncture
IAT	International Association of Trichologists
NPA	Naturopathic Practitioners Association of Australia
SAMTA	South Australian Massage Therapists Association

Federation of Natural and Traditional Therapists Ltd

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Addressing points

Re (i); the extent to which less conventional and complementary treatments are researched, or are supported by research.

Many examples of research can be found on how massage therapy can be of benefit to cancer patients. Often these studies are quite small involving groups of less than a hundred people. In one study, the benefits of massage therapy were compared to the benefits of relaxation therapy, to show if the massage itself had positive effects beyond the relaxation response. The result of the study showed a significant increase in both beneficial natural-killer cells and dopamine levels and a significant decrease in long-term

anxiety, as compared to those who received just relaxation therapy (Massage Versus Relaxation for Breast Cancer).

Re (ii); the efficacy of common but less conventional approaches either as primary treatments or as adjuvant/complementary therapies.

The wealth of small groups researching the efficacy of remedial therapies world wide i.e. massage and reflexology, is evident. The problem in moving the research beyond the stage of pilot studies in to the realms of more significant numbers, is funding. The ultimate result of getting a positive clinical outcome in a large study has no financial benefit for the funding body.

Re (iii); the legitimate role of government in the field of less conventional cancer treatment.

Financial benefits may be gained for some funding bodies, such as a government based body looking for ways to reduce health debt burdens. Benefits may occur if a remedial therapy was proven in significant studies, for example, to reduce the need for a more expensive pain management program. A study on hospitalized cancer patients showed that massage decreased pain along with symptom distress and anxiety (Massage Benefits Hospitalized Cancer Patients).

References:

(Massage Versus Relaxation for Breast Cancer).Source: *The Touch Research Institutes, with support from BIOTONE and the U.S. Department of Defense. Authors: Maria Hernandez-Reif, Ph.D.; Tiffany Field, Ph.D.; Gail Ironson, M.D.; Julia Beutler; Yanexy Vera; Judith Hurley, M.D.; Mary Ann Fletcher, Ph.D.; Saul Schanberg, M.D., Ph.D.; and Cynthia Kuhn, Ph.D.*

(Massage Benefits Hospitalized Cancer Patients) Source: *University of Colorado Health Sciences Center School of Nursing and Denver Veterans Administration Medical Center. Authors: Marlaine C. Smith, R.N., Ph.D.; Janet Kemp, R.N., Ph.D.; Linnea Hemphill, R.N., L.M.T.; and Carol P. Vojir, Ph.D. Originally published in the Journal of Nursing Scholarship, 2002, Vol. 34, No. 3, pp. 257-262.*