

Submission to the Inquiry into National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for Doctors and Other Health Workers

I am a registered pharmacist, registered Chinese Medicine practitioner and registered acupuncturist who is practising in Australia. In the past, I had managed and promoted the Quality Use of Medicine in Australia.

I would submit to the Committee to consider a national registration and accreditation scheme for Chinese medicine practitioners and acupuncturist, similar to other health workers. This is based on the following reasons:

1. Patient care and safety

- both Chinese medicine and Western medicine are used to treat illnesses and restore health of individuals although they adopt different models,
- many pharmaceuticals originate from chemicals extracted from herbs and herbs are used in Chinese medicine. Herbs can have known pharmacological and toxicology effects on human,
- injections with needles are used in Western medicine. Acupuncture needles can be inserted into body during treatment.

2. Training and Qualification

- similar to Western medicine and other health disciplines, there are approved undergraduate and postgraduate courses available in universities to study Chinese medicine and acupuncture,
- except in the State of Victoria, there is no registration requirement to practise Chinese medicine and acupuncture,
- without a national registration scheme, it is very difficult for consumers to judge whether the practitioner has sufficient training and legally qualified to practise Chinese medicine and acupuncture.

3. complaints management and disciplinary processes

- a national registration scheme will allow consumers to have easy access to file a complaint against a practitioner and the registration board can legally determine the necessary disciplinary action based on an established processes.

4. state and territory registration

- there is an existing model of registration in Victoria for consideration,
- it is extremely difficulty for states and territories or professional organizations to setup the registration system because of politics and competing demands of self interests. A national registration scheme will allow an independent assessment on qualifications, training and experience required to practise safe Chinese medicine and acupuncture for all Australians.