

MEDIA RELEASE

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INDUSTRY GROUP CRITICISES LEGAL ACTION THREAT AGAINST NATURAL HEALTH PRODUCTS BILL

The industry umbrella group for New Zealand's natural products manufacturers and marketers has criticised the recent threat of legal action against the Natural Health Products (NHP) Bill.

The Bill proposes to regulate the manufacturing and selling of natural health products in this country and provide much stronger guidance around which ingredients and health benefit claims will be permitted / not permitted, and what product information must be provided.

A detractor has recently issued a media release detailing a threat to take legal action against the Bill, something Natural Products NZ (NPNZ)'s Executive Director Alison Quesnel describes as "a hollow and baseless threat that amounts to little more than scaremongering".

Ms Quesnel says NPNZ's members welcome the new legislation because it will better protect consumers and support exports. The organisation represents more than 140 local natural products, functional foods, complementary medicines, cosmeceuticals and nutraceuticals businesses.

"We feel that the Ministry of Health has bent over backwards to consult all interested parties so as to ensure that the legislation is workable from an industry and consumer perspective. It has therefore been disappointing to learn of considerable scare-mongering and misinformation from some quarters who claim that consumers will no longer be able to access many natural products."

More.../2

Natural Products Bill / 2

Ms Quesnel notes that the recent threat of legal action against the Bill is a hollow one because it is not possible to challenge legislation in this way: "Just because someone says it is a legal challenge doesn't actually make it a legal challenge. The Parliamentary process is the only way to bring up issues or concerns."

She says the 'legal' challenge makes a number of spurious claims, for example wrongly stating that the legislation will restrict cultural and ethnic practise of traditional medicine.

"That is quite simply not the case."

Ms Quesnel says that when considering the debate surrounding the Bill and NPNZ's position on the matter, it is important to bear in mind that - as the body that represents this country's natural products industry - NPNZ and our members potentially have the most to lose from legislation that strengthens the regulations pertaining to natural product sales.

"It is therefore significant that we strongly support the Bill's passage into law. We want this to happen sooner rather than later because we believe the legislation will benefit consumers, the natural health sector and New Zealand as a whole."

-ENDS-

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.

For more information contact:

Alison Quesnel
Executive Director
Natural Products NZ
Ph: (09) 531 5717
Mob: 021 415 888
Email: alison@naturalproducts.nz
Web: www.naturalproducts.nz

Anna Radford
Radford Communications
Mob: (021) 251 2628
Email: anna@radford.co.nz