



PO Box 826
Broadway NSW 2007

T: 02 9211 2441 | F: 02 9211 2281

www.amt.org.au
info@amt.org.au

ABN 32 001 859 285
Established 1966

18 June 2019

The Hon Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister Hunt,

I am writing on behalf of AMT to congratulate the Department of Health on the release of the National Strategic Plan for Pain Management and to urge the COAG Health Ministers to endorse the plan.

Via its 3200-strong member base, AMT is well placed to support the key goals outlined in the National Plan. Over the past 5 years, AMT has focused many of our core activities in support of Goals 2, 3, 4 and 6, through our continuing professional development scheme and social media. AMT actively uses its social media presence to promote current evidence around pain management, as well as evidence-informed messages on the specific role that massage therapy can play in relaxing a sensitised nervous system to ameliorate pain.

Massage therapists are currently an underused and relatively inexpensive resource to help address the lack of access to consumer-centred, best practice pain management. AMT members are geographically dispersed across Australia, with strong networks of practitioners working in regional, rural and remote areas where access to pain services is particularly challenging. A nationally representative cross-sectional survey suggests that massage therapists may already be contributing significantly to the non-pharmacologic management of conditions such as back pain, with 20% of Australians consulting a massage therapist¹. We do not believe that the Government can afford to ignore the significant public health and community reach of the massage therapist workforce.

AMT members have proved themselves to be eager consumers and agents of public health education. For example, over 200 have completed the Wicking Centre's "Understanding Dementia" online training, and hundreds have undertaken specialised study in palliative, oncology and aged care, and pain management. As a flexible, accessible and knowledgeable community of practitioners, massage therapists are well placed to undertake pain management training as part of the National Action Plan. We urge the Department of Health to consider the role that massage therapists can play within the Pain Management strategy.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'R Barnett'.

Rebecca Barnett
Chief Executive Officer

Cc COAG Health Ministers

¹ Steel, A., McIntyre, E., Harnett, J., Foley, H., Adams, J., Sibbritt, D., Wardle, J., ... Frawley, J. (2018). Complementary medicine use in the Australian population: Results of a nationally representative cross-sectional survey. *Scientific reports*, 8(1), 17325. doi:10.1038/s41598-018-35508-y