**Suggested response to MPs/Senators**

Dear MP/Senator,

Thank you for taking the time to respond to my email regarding my concerns about the government’s proposed plan to legislate removal of **shiatsu** from the list of natural therapies scheduled for rebate from private health insurance.

I acknowledge there are many reasons given for why this might sound like a good idea. However, I ask you to consider once again my concerns that you have not yet addressed:

* More than 70% of Australians use some form of natural therapy – the government is ignoring the Australian people and worse – limiting their choice.
* The review is not satisfactory to the Shiatsu Therapy Association of Australia, industry or academics in the field. As previously stated, the review ignores expert advice that there is only one possible standard for measuring the safety and efficacy of natural therapies. We are concerned about the lack of transparency in the review process and lack of representation given to experts on **shiatsu.**
* The same standards of evidence based research methods to prove ‘safety and efficacy’ are NOT being applied to other forms of therapies still approved for private health fund rebates. This includes techniques used in physiotherapy, psychology and podiatry just to name a few examples.
* **Y**ou have not addressed my concern regarding **shiatsu** specifically – ALL other forms of massage have NOT been excluded. This includes relaxation, Swedish, and Thai massage, no questions asked! The review wrongly concluded that shiatsu was not similar to acupressure or TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine). Every study and published peer-reviewed research paper on **shiatsu** defines it as ‘a form of acupressure or massage.’ Also note that in the Australian government’s approved training package for **shiatsu**, ‘Traditional Chinese Medicine theory’ is a core element of **shiatsu** training in Australia. Also quote from report on describing ‘trigger point therapy’ in remedial massage “trigger point therapy is similar to acupressure and shiatsu”.
* **Shiatsu** is a Japanese word meaning finger pressure. Considering the above, please explain the exclusion of shiatsu.
* We repeat our call for funding to support the gold standard level of research that the Australian government and industry are calling for. We all want to be assured that our work is not only safe but also effective.
* I ask that you refer to the STAA fact sheet for more information.