

MEDIA RELEASE

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National Pain Week: a reason to celebrate

This week is National Pain Week and for the first time, chronic pain is now on the national agenda. Rather than just look at the problem of pain, we must now focus on the solution.

With 6.9 million Australians living with a musculoskeletal condition alone, opioid prescribing rising by 24% between 2010-11 and 2014-15, and 81,200 Australians visiting their GP every day for a pain-related issue, pain reform cannot come too soon.

Painaustralia is leading the charge with a national action plan for chronic pain management. Funded by the Australian Government, the plan is a step towards improving access to affordable best practice pain care Australia-wide, and will offer a roadmap for implementation of the National Pain Strategy.

The Strategy – Australia’s framework for best practice pain management – was given broad endorsement by an eminent group of experts from pain medicine, allied health, drug and addiction medicine, mental health, rural health, general practice, pharmacy and rheumatology, as well as consumers, at Painaustralia’s recent roundtable, which was supported by Minister for Health, the Hon Greg Hunt MP.

Developed in 2010 as a result of Australia’s world-first National Pain Summit, the strategy is considered ‘fit for purpose’ to reduce Australia’s pain burden. It recommends an interdisciplinary approach to pain management, along with measures to increase knowledge of pain and pain management among consumers and in the medical community.

We are seeing bipartisan support for the issue, with the ALP including chronic pain in its draft National Platform for the first time this year, and both Minister for Health, the Hon Greg Hunt MP, and Shadow Minister for Health, the Hon Catherine King MP, engaging with Painaustralia and our key stakeholders at our recent Annual General Meeting.

“There has been an unprecedented level of support for the issue of chronic pain in Australia recently, and we appreciate the support of the Australian Government,” said Painaustralia CEO Carol Bennett.

“This long misunderstood and neglected health issue is now receiving the attention it deserves from all sides of politics, a positive move towards ensuring the best possible outcomes for individuals, families, communities, workplaces, as well as the Australian economy.

“We look forward to working with politicians, stakeholders, supporters and consumers to develop a robust and strategic National Action Plan that will offer practical and effective solutions, and hopefully increase access to evidence-based treatments, for millions of Australians living with pain.”

Media contact: Linda Baraciolli

Phone: 0404 931 031

Website: www.painaustralia.org.au