

# Finalisation of investigation relating to the National Health and Medical Research Council's review of the evidence for the effectiveness of homeopathy

The Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman (the Office) has finalised an investigation relating to the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) review of the evidence for the effectiveness of homeopathy, conducted between 2010 and 2015. We commenced this investigation in September 2017 in response to concerns raised with us about how the NHMRC review had proceeded.

The Office conducts its investigations in private, and the Ombudsman generally does not make a public statement in the absence of a formal report. In the circumstances of this matter, including that the then-Ombudsman released a public statement on 4 June 2021 which acknowledged the Office was investigating, we believe it is important to share publicly the information we can, now that the investigation is complete.

Our investigation was finalised in July 2023. We acknowledge the length of time the investigation has taken. This is in part due to the extensive efforts the Office made to source independent scientific expertise to advise us on some detailed and specific questions of scientific methodology that were raised with our Office, including some that were only brought to our attention as our investigation progressed. Despite our best efforts, it was not possible to engage an expert (or experts) to provide independent advice to our Office on this subject. In the absence of independent, expert scientific expertise we have not been able to conclusively determine those matters of scientific methodology. This did not prevent our Office from forming a view on other aspects of the matter.

Our investigation did not result in any adverse findings about the review or the NHMRC. When finalising investigations, we may offer comments and suggestions to an agency about areas for future improvement. In this instance, we offered comments and suggestions to the NHMRC about how it records and publicly explains decisions about its activities. The NHMRC also independently made several improvements to its processes during the course of our investigation.