# COUNCIL OF PHARMACY REGISTERING AUTHORITIES INC

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MRA Review
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Dear Sirs

The members of the Council of Pharmacy Registering Authorities (COPRA) are all the Pharmacy and Pharmacists Boards in Australia. The duties of these organisations include consideration of applications for registration of pharmacists and dealing with notifications under the TTMRA.

It has come to notice that submissions are invited on the Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) and the Trans Tasman Mutual Recognition Agreement (TTMRA).

This Council wishes to make a submission on the latter.

Some concern is held across the pharmacy profession at the likelihood of back door entry to practice in Australia via the TTMRA by persons from third countries who gain registration in New Zealand through free trade agreements and other arrangements and then move to Australia immediately upon registration - that is, without the benefit of what the legislation assumes is practice experience in New Zealand.

Pharmacy legislation in Australia recognises pharmacists with New Zealand qualifications. However, it seems somewhat strange to remove (by TTMRA) the duty and responsibility of Australian authorities to the Pharmaceutical Society of New Zealand when persons from third countries, other than New Zealand, seek registration in Australia.

A further concern is that, as it stands, the legislation does not empower Australian authorities to ascertain whether an applicant has the benefit of recent practice. That means that a person who has not practised for many years may re-register in New Zealand (or may have maintained registration without having practised) and simply notify their presence and begin practice in Australia.

In the case of pharmacy there is an extra dimension to the "equivalence of practice" issue. Whereas, for example, medicine and physiotherapy might well be practised identically in any western country, pharmacy requires, in addition to knowledge of treatments, intimate knowledge of a range of products numbering in excess of 1200 items. Some of these are marketed under different names in the different countries and the vast majority are highly potent.

This Council therefore strongly urges, for the protection of the Australian public, that the Review supports the plea that discretion be given to pharmacy registering authorities to require one month's supervised practice and to provide a tutorial on forensic matters and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme to **all** New Zealand applicants before granting registration under the TTMRA.

Yours sincerely

R J Brennan
Secretariat.
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