



# NICM

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THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF COMPLEMENTARY MEDICINE

## A new phase for NICM

Welcome to the fourth NICM newsletter which updates friends and colleagues on a summer of NICM activities. The major task completed and reported here is the assessment of NICM Collaborative Centre applications. NICM has also completed an extensive recruitment process for both the Executive Director and Business Development Manager and is pleased to announce these important appointments. The Consultative Team has continued to meet regularly and in the coming weeks will finalise the establishment of the Scientific Advisory Committee and External Advisory Board.

## New NICM executive appointments

NICM is pleased to announce and welcome the new appointments to its two primary executive roles. Professor Alan Bensoussan will take up the position of Executive Director and Ms Suzanne Pierce has been appointed NICM General Manager.

**Professor Alan Bensoussan** was Interim Director through NICM's inception and was previously Director of the Centre for Complementary Medicine Research at the University of Western Sydney. Alan is one of Australia's leading researchers in complementary medicine and has made significant positive contributions to public policy in the sector. He brings a wealth of experience to the position and a strong vision to take NICM forward in this critical stage of development. Alan has been in clinical practice in Chinese medicine for over 25 years and is an active researcher, attracting funds from international sources (US NCCAM; UK NHS), from the Australian



National Health and Medical Research Council, the former Department of Education, Science and Training, other Commonwealth and State government departments (NSW, QLD, Victoria) and industry. Professor Bensoussan is a member of the Complementary Medicines Evaluation Committee of the Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration, and has frequently served as a short-term consultant to the World Health Organization. His research and government report on the practice of traditional Chinese medicine in Australia (1996) subsequently led to the passage of the Victorian Chinese Medicine (Practitioner) Registration Act. Alan brings to NICM significant complementary medicine research experience and a successful track record in leadership in the field with a positive impact on relevant public policy.

**Ms. Suzanne Pierce** has worked with the NSW Office for Science and Medical Research for four years, with responsibilities spanning legislation and policy impacting on the research sector; development of national and international partnerships; establishment of the NSW Clinical Trials Business Development Centre;

grants management and initiatives to communicate the role and value of science. She brings extensive experience in strategic policy, corporate planning and performance measures. Suzanne's experience in Government has covered a range of issues including housing; taxation reform; social justice and state development. Suzanne also holds degrees in nursing and anthropology and brings extensive experience to the core NICM team.



## Australian CM capacity audit

In 2005 the NSW Ministry for Science and Medical Research commissioned a landscaping document of the complementary medicine industry and research activities in Australia. NICM has recently completed gathering data to update the audit of CM research activities undertaken by institutional researchers across Australia. Approximately 80 individual researchers and centres were recently surveyed by Dr

Phillip Cheras. NICM also intends gathering further data on additional independent industry research. Monitoring CM research activity provides important background information to inform national policy development. NICM would like to thank all research colleagues who took time to complete the survey data forms. A summary of findings will be available on NICM website in May 2008.

## Upcoming Events

The 3rd International Congress of Complementary Medicine Research will be held 29-31 March 2008 at the Sydney Convention Centre Darling Harbour, Sydney

An important international event  
[www.iccmr2008.com](http://www.iccmr2008.com)

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New online:

**Master of Wellness Program**  
RMIT is aiming to produce both practitioners and managers who will lead the wellness revolution with the launch of its new Master of Wellness program  
[www.rmit.edu.au/health-sciences/wellness](http://www.rmit.edu.au/health-sciences/wellness)



## Establishment of NICM Collaborative Centres

In 2007 NICM engaged an experienced external consultant to project manage the funding round. The selection round began in October 2007 when NICM called for expressions of interest (EOI) in the establishment of the NICM Collaborative Centres. Twenty-four EOIs were received in mid-November and eleven full funding applications were submitted by the December closing date.

NICM was delighted to have had the support of a highly qualified and experienced Expert Assessment Panel to assess the applications. The members came from a range of disciplines relevant to the applications received, including both

complementary and conventional medicine. The panel was supported by an excellent range of external reviewers from both Australia and overseas. Each application was assessed by at least three reviewers. A probity adviser oversaw the entire selection process to ensure that the process was beyond reproach.

There was a high level of competition in the selection round for the limited funding available (\$1.8M). There was a total funding request of \$6.25M, against which a further \$17.4 million was committed by universities and collaborative partners in additional leveraged funds

(cash and in-kind). There is clearly a strong momentum for building capacity in complementary medicine research in Australia. One area where the funding round suggested room for improvement was in building stronger links between researchers and industry and other research users. This will be a focus of future NICM activity.

The successful applicants will be notified independently and announced by Senator Jan McLucas, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing at the Opening of the ICCMR Congress (see below).

## Joint Chair in Traditional Chinese Medicine - Universities of Sydney and Western Sydney

Toward the end of last year the NSW Premier, the Hon Morris Iemma announced the establishment of a new joint professorial Chair in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) to be based at the University of Sydney and the University of Western Sydney and equally co-funded by the two universities. The overall purpose of the Joint Chair is to strengthen and build TCM research capacity in NSW and nationally, to provide international leadership in TCM

research and to support the development of local and overseas partnerships.

International recruitment for this position is anticipated to commence in May. This is an important NSW, Australian and international initiative that promises to strengthen institutional collaboration in TCM research and strengthen Australia's competitive position in the field.

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## ICCMR- 3rd International Congress on Complementary Medicine Research

The Third International Congress on Complementary Medicine Research will bring together leading researchers, practitioners and industry representatives from around the globe. More than 600 delegates from over 30 countries are expected to attend the Congress at the Sydney Convention Centre, Darling Harbour, NSW, Australia from March 29th to 31st, 2008.

The ICCMR is an important international event and is rotated every three years between North America, Europe and Asia Pacific. This is the first time it has come to Australia and as it is unlikely to return for many years this represents an impor-

tant opportunity for all those interested in complementary medicine research. The Congress will bring together leading international experts in clinical and basic CM research, provide insight into some of the latest research and explore the potential role of CM in disease prevention and public health settings.

Several pre-conference workshops will be held by participating institutions covering Globalisation of Herbal Medicine, Herbal Medicines for Brain and Behaviour, Traditional Chinese Medicine Practice and Chiropractic and Mind-Body Medicine.

[www.iccmr2008.com](http://www.iccmr2008.com)

