



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Peter Garrett MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

PG /74

23 May 2008

NEW SCHEME TO HELP CUT TRADE IN WILDLIFE PRODUCTS

A new scheme recognising the efforts of Australia's traditional medicine professionals to protect endangered species was launched today by the Minister for the Environment, Peter Garrett.

The Endangered Species Certification Scheme will enable traditional medicine professionals to obtain official acknowledgement that the products they use or sell do not contain ingredients from threatened species.

The scheme was developed jointly by the Australian Government and the Australian Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine Association (AACMA).

"From today, traditional medicine professionals will be able to use an accreditation logo on their shop front or in any printed material or on websites to communicate publicly that they only use wildlife products that are legally acquired," Mr Garrett said.

"Threatened animals such as rhinoceros, sun bears, turtles and tigers can be used to provide ingredients for these medicines often in the cruelest circumstances, with no regard to the vulnerability of the species.

"It is a something that we have the ability to stop," Mr Garrett said

"I am delighted that traditional medicine practitioners through the AACMA and in partnership with the Australian Government have seized the initiative and have developed a scheme to show where they stand on this issue.

"As well as acknowledging the environmental commitment of each accredited professional, this scheme will help to raise awareness among consumers and encourage them to make informed choices when they are about to buy services and products."

President of the Australian Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine Association, James Flowers said his association had a long-standing policy opposing the use of endangered species in Chinese medicine health care.

"We fully endorse the Endangered Species Certification Scheme as a positive demonstration of the profession's stance on this issue," he said.

"It will not only raise awareness but also acknowledge practitioners and traders who operate in an ethical and professional manner."

Australia is a Party to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) which aims to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. Australia regulates trade in wildlife through a permit system.