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'Chiro Can Help' with Australia's Health

More than 3.7 million Australians have back pain or similar problems according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's (AIHW) two-yearly report card, *Australia's Health 2018*, that was published this week. The Australian Chiropractors Association (ACA - formerly the Chiropractors' Association of Australia) welcomes this report as an opportunity to bring attention to common neuromusculoskeletal conditions, and highlight how chiropractors can help improve the health of Australians.

Australia's Health 2018, launched by the Hon. Greg Hunt MP, Minister for Health, reports how Australia is generally a healthy nation but there are some key areas where we can do better.

ACA President, Dr Anthony Coxon (chiropractor) says that *"While 16% of Australians had back pain and problems in 2014–15, this gets even worse, rising to 26%, if you are over 55 years old. Everyday habits can often be a big factor in determining how well your spine can handle stress."*

"With a core focus on neuromusculoskeletal health, chiropractors are qualified to care for a variety of conditions including back pain, headaches and neck pain. Using non-surgical, drug-free techniques, including spinal manipulation, specific chiropractic adjustments and advising on lifestyle modifications, chiropractors can help people restore and maintain more normal spinal function."

The AIHW report also highlights the concerning increases in the use of opioid drugs, opioid-related poisonings, overdoses and deaths. Reflecting international trends, opioid prescriptions in Australia rose by 24% between 2010–11 and 2014–15. Recent research suggests most pain medicines have little to no effect compared to placebos in treating lower back pain. GP's are now unlikely to recommend pain medicines for the management of lower back pain in response to changes to guidelines.

The American College of Physicians (ACP) low back pain guidelines recommend health professionals and patients should choose drug-free approaches for low back pain, several of which are commonly utilised by chiropractors. For example, in acute and subacute low back pain, these recommendations include options including spinal manipulation, where drug treatment is not desired. For chronic low back pain, the guidelines recommend treatments including exercise therapies, rehabilitation and spinal manipulation.

Dr Coxon explains, *"For the many Australians who suffer with these problems, chiropractic care may be a valuable part of their healthcare plan. By using evidence-informed techniques, and working with patients one-on-one, Australian chiropractors are well qualified, and well placed to help improve the health of the nation."*

Visit chiropractors.asn.au/chirocanhelp to learn more about everyday habits that could place stress on your spine, simple tips to improve your spinal health, and how 'Chiro Can Help'.

For more information on ACA and chiropractic, visit www.chiropractors.asn.au.

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